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# GREEKS AND BARBARIANS

J. A. K. THOMSON









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GREEKS AND BARBARIANS

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# GREEKS & BARBARIANS

BY

J. A. K. THOMSON



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*Stets wird geschieden sein der Menschheit Heer  
In zwei Parteien: Barbaren und Hellenen.*

HEINE, "Für die Mouche."





To  
MY MOTHER





## PREFACE

THERE have been many explanations of ancient Greece and its peculiar spirit. If I may say so, the only original thing about the explanation offered in this book is its want of originality ; for it is the explanation of the Greeks themselves. They believed that Hellenism was born of the conflict between the Greeks and the Barbarians. As Thucydides puts it (I. 3), " Greek " and " Barbarian " are correlative terms ; and Herodotus wrote his great book, " seeking," as he says, " digressions of set purpose," to illustrate just that. About such an explanation there is obviously nothing startling at all. It is indeed (at first sight) so colourless and negative, that it must be dissatisfaction with it which has provoked all the other explanations. Scholars must have said to themselves, " What is the use of repeating that Hellenism is the opposite of Barbarism ? We know that already." But they knew it only in a formal or abstract way. It is but the other day that classical scholars have begun to study the Barbarian and to *work out* the contrast which alone can give us the material for a rich understanding of the Greek himself. Without this study one's ideas of the Greek could not fail to be somewhat empty and colourless. But any one who cares to read even the meagre outline which these essays supply will hardly complain that there is a lack of colour.

The subject indeed is so vast that one is compelled to be selective and illustrative. Even to be this is far from easy. For instance, it seems extraordinary to write upon the meaning of Hellenism without a chapter on Greek art. Such a chapter, however, is excluded by the design of this book, which must dispense with illustrations ; whereas in dealing with literature I could always drive home my point by simple quotation. Then again it may appear a little old-fashioned and arbitrary that I confine myself to the centuries before Alexander. But after all it was, in these centuries that Hellenism rose into its most characteristic form—and in any case a man must stop somewhere.

We lovers of Greece are put very much on our defence nowadays, and no doubt we sometimes claim too much for her. She sinned deeply and often, and sometimes against the light. Things of incalculable value have come to us not from her. There probably never was a time when she had not something to learn from the Barbarians about her—from Persia, from Palestine, from distant China. But when all is said, we owe it to Greece that we think as we do, and not as Semites or Mongols. I believe that on the whole our modes of thought are preferable. At any rate they have on the whole prevailed. And what we students of Greece argue is that she was fighting our battle ; that in the deepest and truest and most strictly historical sense the future of the things we cherish most was involved in her fortunes. How then could we fail to sympathise with her ? I have tried to be just ; I could not be dispassionate.

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# GREEKS AND BARBARIANS

## I

### THE AWAKENING

IT began in Ionia. It may in truth have been a reawakening. But if this be so (and it is entirely probable), it was after so long and deep a slumber that scarcely even dreams were remembered. The Ionians used to say that they remembered coming from Greece, long ago, about a thousand years before Christ—as we reckon it—driven from their ancient home on the Peloponnesian coast of the Corinthian Gulf by “Dorians” out of the North. They fled to Athens, which carried them in her ships across the Aegean to that middle portion of the eastern shore which came to be known as Ionia. For this reason they were in historical times accounted (by the Athenians at least) “colonists of the Athenians.” Nobody in antiquity appears seriously to have disputed this account of the Ionians. There may be considerable truth in it; and if not, the Ionians were pretty good at disputing. The Athenians belonged to that race. But if you questioned the Ionians further and asked them about their origins in prehistoric Greece, you had to be content with the Topsy-like answer that the first

Ionians grew out of the ground. They were *Autochthones*, Earth-Children. The critical Thucydides puts it this way: he says the same stock has *always* inhabited Attica. People in his time could remember when old Athenian gentlemen used to wear their hair done up in a top-knot fastened by a golden pin in the form of a cicala—because the cicala also is an Earth-Child.

Of course in historical times the Ionians were Greeks. But they may not always have been Greeks. Herodotus apparently thinks they were not. He says they learned to speak Greek from their Dorian conquerors. The natural inference from this would be that they were of a different racial stock. Herodotus, however, is nearly as fond of a hypothesis as Mr. Shandy, and it is quite possible that he is here labouring an argument (which in turn may have been mere Dorian propaganda), that the only pure-blooded Hellenes were the Dorian tribes, who admittedly came on the scene much later than the Ionians. In fact the Ionians may have been simply an earlier wave of a great invasion of Greek-speakers which came to an end with the Dorians. We do not know, and Herodotus did not know. The Ionians themselves did not know. There are two possibilities. Either they were an indigenous people who became Hellenized (as Herodotus supposes), or they were a folk of Hellenic affinities who were long settled in Greece in the midst of a still earlier population. What of that? Only this, that we have suddenly discovered a great deal about this pre-historic Aegean population, above all that it had developed a civilization which seems almost too brilliant to be true. Now if



the fugitives who escaped to Ionia were a fragment of this race, or even were aliens who had only imbibed a portion of its culture, the awakening which came so long after may have been in fact a reawakening.

Archæologists, digging in the sites of old Ionian cities, have discovered evidence that the early settlers possessed something of the Aegean culture. The crown and centre of that culture was the island of Crete, and there existed some dim traditions of Cretans landing in Ionia ; only then it was probably not called Ionia. This, and some other considerations, have prompted the suggestion that the Ionians really came from Crete. But it seems more in accordance with the evidence to suppose that the main body of them came from Greece proper, where they had learned the "Mycenaean" culture, which was the gift of Crete. The calamitous Dorians wrecked that wonderful heritage, but for some time at least the settlers in their new "Ionian" home would remember how to fashion a pot fairly and chant their traditional lays. Then, it would seem, they all but forgot ; little wonder, when you consider how dire was their plight. Yet even in that uneasy sleep into which they fell of a recrudescient barbarism the Ionians remembered something as in a dream ; and it became the most beautiful dream in the world, for it is Homer.

Now let us appeal to history. The history of Ionia is a drama in little of what afterwards happened on a wider stage in Greece.

The settlers found a beautiful land with (so Herodotus, not alone, exclaims) "the best climate in the world." Considerable rivers, given to "meandering," carve long valleys into the hilly interior

of Asia Minor and offered in their mouths safe anchorages for the toy-like ships of the ancients. It is typical Aegean country and would have no unfamiliar look to the settlers. Naturally they did not find the new land empty. It contained a native population who were called, or came to be called, by the general appellation of "Carians"—barbaric warriors with enormous helmets crowned by immense horse-hair crests, and armed with daggers and ugly-looking falchions like reaping-hooks. The newcomers fought with them, slew largely among them, made some uncertain kind of truce with them, married their women, got their interested help against the Persian when he grew powerful. But that was all. They never succeeded in making them truly Greek or completely civilized. They only mast-headed them on their hills and, if they caught one, made a slave of him. Throughout Greek history the Carians maintained a virtual independence in the highlands of Ionia, keeping their ancient speech and customs, cherishing the memory of their old-world glory when they rowed in the ships of King Minos of Crete and fought his battles, and professing no interest in the wonderful cities growing up almost or quite in view of their secluded eyries. Very strange it seems. Yet it is typical. If we think of Greek civilization as a miracle wrought in a narrow valley with sullen Carians hating it from the surrounding hills, we shall get no bad picture—for I will not call it an allegory—of the actual situation all through antiquity till Alexander came. So near was the Barbarian all the time.

The Ionians had always to struggle against being crowded into the sea by the more or less savage

racess of Anatolia. That vast region has always been full of strange and obscure races and fragments of races. It is so formed that the migrating peoples flooding through it were sure to lose side-eddies down its deep, misleading valleys, to stagnate there. It must, when Ionia was founded, have had a peculiarly sombre and menacing aspect. The mighty empire of the Hittites had fallen and left, so far as we can see, a turmoil of disorganized populations between the sea and the dreadful Assyrians. Here and there no doubt traces of the Hittite civilization were discernible, sculptures of a god in peasant dress—a sort of moujik-god—or of that eternal trinity of Divine Father, Son, and Mother. The wondering Greeks saw a great cliff at Sipylos fashioned like a weeping woman, and called her Niobe. They seem to have admired Carian armour and borrowed that. There was probably nothing else they could borrow from the Carians except their lands. There was a numerous people dwelling farther inland called the Lydians, who even then must have had some rudimentary civilization and who afterwards, absorbing what they could of Ionian culture, threatened the cities with slavery. Further down the coast, in the south-western corner of the peninsula, where somewhat later the Dorians settled, lived the Lycians, who had the kind of civilization which counts descent on the mother's side and buries its dead in holes of a cliff, as sea birds lay their eggs. The northern part of the Aegean coast was occupied by Mysians, Phrygians and kindred races, who never could get themselves cultivated. They worshipped gods like Papaïos, which is Papa, and Bagaïos, which must be the same as Bog, which is the Russian for God.



This was the kind of world into which the fugitives were thrown. It mattered the less perhaps because their real home was the sea. Yet even the sea gave them only a temporary escape from the Barbarian. Wherever they landed they met him again on the beach. Imagine, if you will, a ship trading from the chief Ionian harbour, Miletus. Imagine her bound for the south-east coast of the Black Sea for a cargo of silver. She would pick her way by coast and island till she reached the Dardanelles. From that point onwards she was in unfriendly waters. On one side were the hills of Gallipoli (Achi Baba and the rest—we do not know their ancient names), inhabited by “Thracians” of the sort called Dolonkoi; on the other side was the country of the kindred “Phrygians.” It was likely to go hard with a Greek ship cast away on either shore. Thence through the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus into the Euxine. Then came days and days of following the long Asiatic coast, dodging the tide-races about the headlands, finding the springs of fresh water known to the older hands, pushing at night into some rock-sheltered cove, sleeping on the beach upon beds of gathered leaves. And so at last to some harbour of “Colchians,” men whose complexion and hair would make you swear they were Egyptians, circumcised men, violently contrasting with their neighbours the Phasianoi, who live in the misty valley of the romantic Phasis—large, fat, sleepy-looking men, flabby men with pasty faces, who grow flax in the marshy meadows of their languid stream. From these partially civilized peoples the Greeks would glean news of the mountain-tribes of the interior,

uncanny "Chalybes," who know where to find iron and silver in the ribs of their guarded hills, and the utter savages of the Caucasus, whose single art is printing the shapes of beasts in colours upon their clothes, and who, like the beasts, are without shame in love.

Or suppose our ship bound for the corn-bearing region behind the modern port of Odessa in South Russia. Once through the Bosphorus, she would make her course along the shore of a wide and wintry territory inhabited by red-haired, blue-eyed Thracians, a race akin to certain elements in the population of Greece itself, warlike, musical, emotional, mystical, cruel. Here and there the merchant would land for water or fresh meat—at Salmydessos, at Apollonia, at Mesembria, at Odessos, at Tomi (but we do not know when these places got their names)—till he reached the mouths of the Danube. Wherever he touched he might have the chance to hear of wild races further inland, such as the Getai, very noble savages, who believed in the immortality of men, or at least of the Getai. They were of the opinion that when one of them left this life he "went to Salmoxis." Salmoxis, he lived in an underground house and was their god. Every four years they sent a messenger to him to tell what they wanted. Their method was this. First they told the messenger what he must ask, and then they tossed him in the air, catching him as he fell on the points of their spears. If he died, this meant a favourable answer from Salmoxis. But if the messenger did not die, then they blamed the messenger and "dispatched" another. Also they used to shoot arrows at the sun and moon,

defying those luminaries and denying their godhead. These were "the most righteous of the Thracians," according to Herodotus, who expresses and perhaps shared the sentiment, at least as old as Homer, which attributed exceptional virtue to remote and simple peoples like the Hyperboreans and the Ethiopians and the "Koumiss-Eaters," the Hip-pemolgoi or Glaktophagoi. If the Getai were the most righteous of the Thracians, one rather wonders what the rest were like. These were certainly capable of nearly anything in their moments of religious frenzy. They would tear raw flesh with their teeth, sometimes (it was whispered) the living flesh of children. At certain times of the year the Thracian women went mad upon the midnight hills, worshipping Dionysus. (The wild splendour of that scene shines and shudders like one of their own torches through the *Bacchae* of Euripides.) The Thracians of the coast had an evil reputation as wreckers. . . .

Beyond the Danube was "Scythia." All that district between the river and the Crimea was from the earliest times of which we have record what it is to-day, a grain-growing country. Its capital was the "Market of the Borysthenites," which preferred to call itself Olbia, "the City of Eldorado." Here the merchant would find a curious population, very fair in type, great horsemen, wearing peaked caps of felt and carrying half-moon shields. In the Russian army which fought Napoleon in 1814 were Siberian archers whom the French nicknamed Les Amours. I do not venture to say that these were Scythians, but it is clear that an ancient Scythian (half naked, with his little recurved bow) must have looked rather like an overgrown barbaric



Cupid. At Athens it was thought comic to stage a Scythian. Only, as to that, it should be remembered that the Athenians recruited their police from Scythia, and that the human mind seems to find something inherently comic in a policeman.

The Scythians were not all savages. Some of them were skilled farmers. With these the Greek settlers intermarried, and as early as Herodotus there was a considerable half-breed population. A motley town like Olbia was the place for stories—stories of the “Nomads” who neither plough nor sow, but wander slowly over the interminable steppes with their gipsy vans in which the women and children huddle under the stretched roof of skins; stories of the Tauri, who live in the Crimea, and sacrifice the shipwrecked to their bloody idol, clubbing them on the head like seals. *And their enemies when they subdue them they treat as follows. Every man cuts off a head and carries it away to his house, and then fixing it on a long pole sets it up high above the house, generally above the chimney; for they will have it that the whole house is protected by the heads up there. They live by plunder and fighting. The Neuroi, another of these Scythian tribes, were driven from their original home by “serpents,” and look as if they might be sorcerers. For the Scyths and the Greeks who live in Scythia say that once a year every man of the Neuroi turns into a wolf, but is restored to human shape after a day or two. Now when they say this they do not convince me—Herodotus—still they say it and even take an oath in saying it. But the Man-Eaters are the worst savages of all, for they follow neither rule nor law of any kind. They are nomads, and are dressed like Scyths, and have a*

*language of their own, and are the only cannibals among those peoples. The Black-Cloaks all wear black cloaks. Hence their name. Their customs are Scythian. The great tribe of the Boudinoi have all bright blue eyes and excessively red hair. They live in a wooden town. They are aboriginal nomads and eat lice.*

Beyond the Boudinoi lived a folk that were bald from birth—men *and* women—besides having snub noses and large chins. The bald ones lived upon wild cherries, straining the juice off thick and dark, and then licking it up or drinking it mixed with milk. They dwelt under trees, every man under his tree, on which in winter he stretched a piece of white felt to make a kind of tent. On the mountains leaped goat-footed men; and beyond the goat-footed lived men who slept away six months of the year. The Issêdones ate their dead fathers, whose skulls they afterwards gilded and honoured with sacrifices. "In other respects" they were accounted just, and the women had as much authority among them as the men. Then came the one-eyed Arimaspeans and the gold-guarding griffins. . . .

Suppose we change the scene, and send the Milesian ship on a voyage to the African coast. What would the merchant find there? Herodotus will tell us. By the shores of the Greater Syrtis live the Nasamônes. They in summer (he tells us) leave their flocks by the seashore and go up-country to gather dates at an oasis. They catch locusts, dry them, pound them, sprinkle the dust on milk, and swallow the draught. Beyond their territory are the Garamantes "in the Wild Beast Country." They run away when they see anybody, and do not know how to fight. West of the Nasamônes on the coast are

the Makai, who dress their hair in the fashion of a cock's comb and fight with shields of ostrich skin. Beyond the Makai live the Gindânes, whose women wear leathern anklets, putting on a new anklet for every new lover. "And each woman has many anklets." On a promontory of this region dwell the Lotos Eaters. . . .

The Nomads roam from oasis to oasis over a land of salt and sand. Here is found the race of Troglodytes or Cave Men, swiftest of human beings; whom the Garamantes hunt in four-horse chariots. The Troglodytes feed upon snakes and lizards and other reptiles. Their language does not sound human at all but like the squeaking of bats. At some distance from the Garamantes dwell the Atarantes, among whom nobody has a name. These, when the sun is excessively hot, curse him and cry him shame for scorching them and their land. The Atlantes, whose dwelling is under Mount Atlas and its shrouded peaks, are said to be vegetarians and to have no dreams. Beyond these stretches the unknown desert, where men live in houses built of salt, for it never rains there. Hereabouts wander a number of tribes concerning whom Herodotus remarks generally, "All these peoples paint themselves vermilion and eat monkeys."

Well, that was the kind of world in which Greek civilization was born. Do not say I have been describing a remote barbarism. Remoteness is relative to more than space, and to the Ionians the sea was no barrier, but the contrary. They knew the whole south coast of the Black Sea, for instance, better than their own Asiatic hinterland. But even if we exclude the Black Sea and Libya as remote,



where did they not at first find barbarism? In Hellas? But they had just escaped from Hellas, driven out by the wild first "Dorians," who were steadily engaged in ruining what the Ionians in their new home were trying to save. In Mesopotamia? But between it and them lay all mountainous Anatolia crowded with diverse races, most of them savage, all of them hostile. Egypt at first and for long was closed to them by an exclusive foreign policy. The unoriginal and materialistic culture of Phoenicia was withheld (for what it was worth) by commercial rivalry. The West as yet had nothing to give. Weak in numbers, in want of everything, shut in with such neighbours, Ionia discovered in herself the force to rescue her feet from this mire, and to found our modern civilization of reason and freedom and imaginative energy.

Naturally the process took time. The first century or so must have been largely lost in the mere struggle for survival. There may even have been in some ways a retrogression—a fading out of the Mycenaean culture, the admission of "Carian" elements needing gradual assimilation. That period is historically so much of a blank to us, that when we do begin to note the signs of expansion they give us the surprise of suddenness. Miletus is all at once the leading city of the Greek world. It plants colony after colony on the Dardanelles, in the Sea of Marmara, along the shores of the Euxine. Ionia is awake while Hellas is still asleep. Ionian traders, Ionian soldiers, Ionian ships are everywhere. The men of Phokaia opened to trade the Adriatic, Etruria, Spain. In the reign of Psammetichos—the First or Second—some Ionian and Carian pirates were

forced to land in Egypt. They were clad according to their fashion in panoply of bronze. An Egyptian came to the Marshes and told the king that "bronze men from the sea are wasting the plain," having never before seen men in such armour. Now the words of the messenger were the very words of an oracle that had bidden Psammetichos seek the help of "bronze men from the sea," so the king hired the strangers to serve in his army, and by their aid overcame his enemies. The story (which is in Herodotus) is told in a way to provoke the sceptical. But wait a moment. At Abusimbel in Upper Egypt there is a great temple, and before the temple stand colossal statues. On the legs of one of these are scratched Greek words: *When King Psamatichos came to Elephantine, those who sailed with Psamatichos the son of Theokles wrote this; and they went above Kertis, as far up as the river let them, and Potasimpto led the men of alien speech, and Amasis the Egyptians. Archon the son of Hamoibichos and Pelekos the son of Houdamos wrote me*—this is, the inscription. Beneath are the signatures of Greek-speaking soldiers. The writers must have been Ionian mercenaries under a leader who for some reason adopted the king's name. It is to such fellows we owe our names for Egyptian things. "Crocodile" is just the Ionian word for a lizard, and "pyramid" really means a wheaten cake. Ostriches they called "sparrows." The British private soldier in Egypt is probably making similar jokes to-day. To return to the inscription, the "men of alien speech" commanded by Potasimpto—an Egyptian name—were probably Carians. The date of the writing cannot be later than 589 B.C. when Psammetichos II

ceased to reign. The date is not so striking as the fact that these fighters (who, to put it gently, are not likely to have had the best Ionian education) could legibly write. Their spelling, I admit, is not affectedly purist; but then, spelling is a modern art.

The first great Ionian (discounting the view of some that Homer was an Ionian poet) was the greatest of all. This was Archilochus, who was born in the little island of Paros somewhere about the end of the eighth century before Christ. His poetry is all but lost, his life little more than a startling rumour. The ancients, who had him all to read, spoke of him in the same breath with Homer. He was not only so great a poet, but he was a new kind of poet. Before him men used the traditional style of the heroic epic. This Archilochus sings about himself. We hear in him a voice as personal, as poignant, as in Villon or Heine or Burns; it is a revolutionary voice. Modern literature has nothing to teach Archilochus. One can see that in the miserable scanty fragments of his astonishing poetry that have come down to us.

As for the man himself, the case against him looks pretty black. He himself is quite unabashed. But he also complains of hard luck, and there may be something in this plea. If he was a bastard, much could be forgiven him; but that theory seems to rest on a misapprehension of his meaning. His father was evidently an important man among the Parians. There does not appear to be any good reason why Archilochus should have had so bad a time of it except the reason of temperament. *One great thing I do know*, quoth he, *how to pay back in bitter*



*kind the man who wrongs me.* He certainly did know that, but the knowledge was not going to make him popular. He never could get on with people. He hated Paros, where, one would have thought, his father's son had a fair chance of happiness. *Damn Paros—and those figs—and a life at sea.* Later he accompanied a colony, led by his father, to the island of Thasos off the Thracian coast; and he did not like Thasos any more than Paros. *It sticks up,* he says in his vivid way, *like a donkey's backbone, wreathed in wild woods.* He also grumbles that *the plagues of all Hellas have run in a body to Thasos.* He did not like the sea, and yet he was a good deal on it. Pulling at an oar and munching onions no doubt seemed to him a poor conception of life, but a thrilling line *Let us hide the bitter gifts of the Lord Poseidon* rather breathes an imaginative horror. The man is a master of this kind of sinister beauty. *There were thirty that died—we overtook them with our feet—a thousand were we who slew.* There you have it again. Oh yes, he had an overpowering sense of beauty, and a wonderful imagination—but also he had something else. That was just the tragedy. His genius had a twist in it which hurt himself as well as other people. He had loved a girl whom he saw *playing with a branch of myrtle and a rose, in the shadow of her falling hair.* He believed that she had been promised in marriage to him; but something happened, and they did not marry. It may be said for Neoboule and her father that Archilochus was not the sort they made good husbands of; and if any one is still disposed to condemn them, he may relent when he hears that the poet assailed them with a fabulous bitterness

of tongue—assailed them till, according to the story, they hanged themselves. He meantime followed the call of his temperament, or of the poverty into which his temperament had brought him, and became a professional soldier. *I shall be called a mercenary like a Carian*, he says with a touch of what looks like bravado. What a life for a poet! *I am the servant of the Lord of War, and I know the lovely guerdon of the Muses*, he says superbly. His way of living is reflected in his speech. There is lust and drunkenness in it, and a kind of soldierly joviality. *Wild-fig-tree of the rock feeding many crows, good-natured Pasiphile who makes strangers welcome*. Pasiphile hardly needs a commentator. Nor does the half-line preserved by a grammarian (who quoted it to illustrate the dative case)—*plagued with lice*.

Archilochus was sent to fight the Saioi, a wild tribe of the Thracian mainland opposite Thasos. It would seem that the Greeks were defeated. At any rate, he for one ran away, abandoning his shield—to Greek sentiment an unforgivable offence. Who tells us this? Archilochus himself, adding impudently that he doesn't care; he can easily get another shield, and meantime his skin is whole. The ancient world never quite got over the scandal of this avowal. Archilochus aggravated it by a poem to a friend in which he remarks that a man who pays much attention to charges of cowardice won't have very many pleasures. But cowards don't become soldiers, and don't write humorous accounts of their misbehaviour. He was a fighter to the last. A man of Naxos killed him.

There are in the fragments of Archilochus notes

of tenderness and even delicacy, notes of a singularly impressive pathos. There are indeed all notes in him, from the bawdy to the divine. It would be absurd to call him a bad man—quite as absurd as to call him a good one. He is a man. And what makes him so fascinating is just this, that for the first time in literature a man expresses himself. His extraordinary greatness is almost a secondary matter by the side of that portentous phenomenon. It was the Ionians who produced him.

Archilochus was absorbed in his own adventures, but even he must have noted the tremendous events which were changing the nations before his eyes. A fierce and numerous folk, known to the Greeks as the Cimmerians (*Kimmerioi*—their name survives in Crimea and Crim Tartary), broke loose or were thrust from their homes in the steppes and poured into Asia Minor, apparently through what is called the "Sangarios Gap" in Phrygia. You may see them fighting Ionians on a sarcophagus from Clazomenae which is in the British Museum. They rode bareback on half-tamed horses and slew with tremendous leaf-shaped swords. They destroyed the power of Phrygia, then the greatest in the peninsula, and King Midas, last of his race, killed himself (by drinking bull's blood, men said). Lydia succeeded to the place and the peril of the Phrygians. She was under the rule of a new king (called "Gugu"), who made a strong fight of it, but was ultimately, about 650 B.C., defeated and slain by the half-naked riders under their king Tugdammi, who sacked the Ionian towns. The Ionians, however, made common cause with Ardys the son of Gugu or Gyges, as the Greeks called him, and along with the Lydians they beat this



Tugdammi and drove away his people. Then the kings of Lydia, secure and strong and wealthy, turned their arms against Ionia, which thenceforward has to fight one long and losing battle with overmastering enemies. Gyges, Ardys, Sadyattes, Alyattes, Croesus—they all attacked her. Meantime, in the reign of Alyattes, the greatest of these monarchs, a new and far more imposing power had got itself consolidated to the east of the Lydian empire. This was the kingdom of the Medes. The rivals fought a great battle, which ended in the twilight and alarm of a total eclipse of the sun on May 28, 585 B.C. They made peace for the time, and Alyattes could proceed with the gradual reduction of the ports. But in the next generation—for all the East had been set in motion—the Medes in their turn had fallen under the authority of the kindred Persians and the great conqueror Cyrus, who in due time rushed west with his invincible footmen and his unfamiliar camels, destroyed Lydia in a moment, and contemptuously left a general to complete the conquest of Ionia.

All this time, and even under the Persian, the Ionians continued to develop and enrich the mind of the world. If science means the effort to find a rational instead of a mythological explanation of things, then the Ionians invented science. Thales of Miletus predicted that eclipse. Anaximander of Miletus held a theory about the origin of life which anticipates modern speculation. He wrote a book about it, which was probably the first example of literary prose in Greek. He also made the first map. His fellow-citizen Hecataeus invented history. . . . These are just some of the things the Ionians did. The rest of the Hellenes—first the colonies

in Italy and Sicily, then the Athenians—caught the flame from them and kept it alive through later storms. But there was no more than time for this when the eastern cloud descended on Ionia. Athens could take up the torch. But Ionia was down.

## II

### KEEPING THE PASS

THE innumerable East was pouring out of Thessaly into the Malian Plain, flooding in by two main channels, the hill-road through the pass of Thaumaki and the coast-road along the shore of the westward-bending Gulf of Malis. First came the pioneers, then the fighters, then the multitude of camp-followers and trains of supply which had fed all those numbers over so many leagues of hostile and unharvested regions. On attaining the brow of the steep climb to Thaumaki, had one looked back upon the view which gave this point its name of *The Place of Wondering*, he must have seen the wide Thessalian plain alive with an unwonted stir of men and baggage-wains and animals, and touched with shifting points of barbaric colour. As the continuous stream flowed past him he could note everything in greater detail—"Persians and Medes and Elamites," the different contingents with their varying armature; footmen and horsemen; sump-ter-mules and a number of high-necked, slow-striding camels, some of them showing on their flanks the proof that there were lions in Macedonia. Through the noise of the march would come the babel of



strange oriental tongues. Enclosing all this, very far away could be descried a shadowy girdle of great mountains, from the highest and most distant of which the gods of Olympus looked down upon the invasion of Greece.

But Xerxes, driving along the coast-road to where it meets the Thaumaki route at Lamia, beheld a different sight. Mount Oeta stretched its wild massif there before him. At its western extremity (which he was approaching) the range piles itself into a shapeless bulk, crowding together its summits, which here in a surprising manner suddenly leap up some six or seven thousand feet from the plain. As the system trends eastward it sags down to a much lower level, but is there formidably guarded by the black precipices of the Trachinian Cliffs. Eastward yet it continues declining, until it is perhaps not three thousand feet high, then rises again another two thousand. This is the part that was called Kallidromos. Between the marshy shore of the Gulf and the broken cliff-wall of the mountain runs the Pass. Towering over all, at a vast distance rises the strange, enormous peak called Giona; while far to the south may be descried the most famous mountain in the world.

In the fierce sunlight of that sweltering day the King could not have failed to mark on his side of the Pass, under the very highest peaks of the range, a great black gash in the rocky barrier. As he approached it revealed itself to be the gorge through which the tormented Asôpos bores its narrow way between sheer walls of an altitude that disturbs the mind. A little space beyond the gorge, on the farther side of the Asôpos where it enters the Gulf,

begins the Pass. The army was halted. Xerxes sent forward a scout.

The scout entered the Pass at a point where the sea barely left room for the road between it and the mountain, which here, gradually accentuating the gentle slope near the summit, comes down precipitously in the last few hundred feet. He rode a mile and met no one. Then the Pass, opening out a little towards the right, showed him the old temples where the Amphiktyones, the "Dwellers Round," used to meet upon their sacred business. The road kept skirting the sea-marsh for a little, then rose in a long slope. He made his way cautiously to the summit. Arrived there, he all at once saw, thrust as it were into his face (so near they seem) the monstrous precipices of Kallidromos, three thousand feet high, all glistening at its eastern end with the whitish deposit of those clear bluish-green sulphur springs which gave its name to this famous place—the "Hot Gates," *Thermopylae*. But the scout had no eyes for this great vision, for he saw, where the road again approaches the rocky wall, the red tunics of Spartan hoplites.

What were they doing? Some of them were practising the use of their weapons. Some were sitting on the ground and—yes—combing their long hair! One of them must have made a jest, for the others broke out laughing. The scout could not understand it at all. He counted them: a ridiculous handful. There were in fact rather more of them than he could see; an ancient wall across the Pass hid the rest. The scout rode quietly back with his information. Now one reason why the

Spartans were combing their hair was this. It was customary among them to comb the hair of the dead.

They knew what was before them. Two of their spies had been captured by Xerxes, who let them go after fully showing them his whole array. The report of the spies was not likely to fall short of the facts as a result of this policy. All the East was on the march ! Besides the Persians, Medes and Kissians, who formed the flower of the invading army, were coming the Assyrians, one of the great conquering races of history, distinguishable by their helmets of bronze and leathern straps curiously interwoven, by their clubs studded with iron nails, and by their linen breastplates. There were coming, the Bactrians with their bows of cane ; the Sakai wearing their pointed sheepskin caps and armed with their native battleaxes ; dark Indians in their cotton garments, carrying their bows of bamboo and iron-tipped arrows. There were hide-wrapped Caspians bearing sword and bow ; Sarangians in dyed raiment and booted to the knee ; Paktyes, Outioi, Mykoi, Parikanioi. . . . There were Arabians in flowing burnous who shot with the long bow ; Ethiopians in the pelts of leopards and lions bearing spears of antelope's horn and bossy maces and huge bows of split palm-wood with little arrows tipped with agate, who when they went to battle coloured half their black bodies with chalk and half with vermilion. (The " Eastern Ethiopians " wore on their heads the scalps of horses with the mane and ears attached ; their shields were the backs of cranes.) There were Libyans from North Africa in goatskin garments ; and buskined Paphlagonians in plaited headpieces. There were Phrygians, Armenians, Lydians, Mysians. There



were Thracians with their foxskin caps, their deer-skin buskins, their long, many-coloured mantles. There were tribes armed with little shields of cow-hide and hunting-spears, two for each warrior; on their heads were bronze helmets and on the helmets the ears and horns of an ox in bronze, their legs were bound in crimson puttees. The Milyai were there, their cloaks fastened by brooches and with leathern skull-caps on their heads; the Moschoi, whose helmets were made of wood; the Tibarenes, the Makrônes, the Mossynoikoi; the Mares; the Colchians with wooden helms and raw-hide shields; the Alarodians and the Saspeires; the tribes from the islands of the Red Sea. . . .

These (and more) were the infantry of the King. In addition there were the cavalry and the fleet.

There was the fine Persian cavalry. There were the Sagartians, who fought with the lasso; Medes and Kissians; Indians, some riding on steeds, some in chariots drawn by horses or by wild asses; Bactrians and Sakai; the Libyan charioteers; Perikanians; Arabians on camels.

To form the vast fleet came the famous mariners of Phoenicia and Syrians of Palestine—helmeted men with linen breastplates and rimless shields, throwers of the javelin. The Egyptians sent their navy, whose men had defences of plaited work on their heads, and carried hollow shields with enormous rims, and were armed with boarding-pikes and poleaxes and great triangular daggers. The Cyprian contingent could be recognized by the turbans of their "kings" and the felt hats of the common sort. The Cilician seamen were there in woollen jerseys. Pamphylians were there. The

Lycian crews wore greaves and cuirasses, and were armed with bows of cornel wood and reed arrows without feathers, and with casting-spears; you knew them by the goatskins floating from their shoulders, their plumed hats, their daggers and crescent-shaped falchions. The Dorians of Asia were there, men of Greek race; the subject Ionians, alas; some from the Greek isles; the Aeolians; the "Hellespontians." On board of every ship was a band of fighting men.

To defend the Pass there were three hundred Spartans; to be exact, 297, all picked men and, that their race might not perish out of Sparta, all fathers of sons. They were accompanied by their less heavily armed attendants. There were 2,196 men from Arcadia, 400 from Corinth, 200 from Phlius, 30 from Homeric Mycenae, now a ruinous little town, 700 Thespians, 400 Thebans of doubtful loyalty, 1,000 Phocians, the whole levy of the Opuntian Locrians; in all not eight thousand men. The whole force was under the command of one of the two Spartan kings. You know his name.

The right flank of the Greeks rested upon the narrow seas between the Malian coast and Euboea. The Athenian fleet was at Artemision guarding the narrows against the vastly superior navy of the enemy. From the heights above the road Leonidas could signal to the Athenian admiral.

The King prepared to attack simultaneously by land and sea. While the great army was making its way into Malis, his fleet was sailing along the iron coast of Magnesia, where the sea breaks under the imminent range of wooded Pelion. A squadron was detached to circumnavigate Euboea and cut

off the retreat of the Greek ships in the Straits. Next morning everything would be ready for the concerted assault. The main portion of the fleet would enter the Malian Gulf, while the other ships were entering the "Hollows of Euboea." Then Xerxes would rush at the Pass.

Only—in the sultry night following the long, hot day thunder began to mutter along the heights of Pelion. It increased to a violent storm, and the watchers on the Euboean mountains saw every now and then the whole range lit up by vivid lightning. Then the wind—the "Hellesponter" from the north-east—rose to so great a fury that the sea was quickly all in a turmoil. For three days the tempest raged, for three nights the bale-fires of the Greeks tossed their red beards in the wind. Great numbers of Persian ships were cast away upon the rocks about Cape Sepias. The squadron sent to round Kaphareus was wrecked in the Hollows. So rich a treasure was lost that a farmer near Sepias became the wealthiest Greek of his time by merely picking up what was washed upon the beach. And for these three days Xerxes must mark time before the Pass.

On the fourth day the Persian fleet succeeded in entering the Pagasæan Gulf. Then Xerxes ordered the attack. His Persian bodyguard, the ten thousand "Immortals," who were his best troops, were held in reserve. Meanwhile the Medes and Kissians, admirable infantry to whom victory had long become a habit, were sent forward to wear down the Spartan resistance. They were dressed in close-fitting leathern garments, in trousers (which surprised the Greeks) and curious fez-like caps, of soft felt or cotton,



projecting in a kind of drooping horn at the front. (But the Kissians wore turbans.) They had sleeved tunics of many colours and cuirasses of bronzen scales like the skin of some great fish. They had wicker shields from behind which they cast their long spears (but the Greek spears were longer) and shot the reed arrows from their little bows (but the Greek bows were smaller). At their right sides swung from their girdles their foot-long stabbing swords. Their emperor, throned on a golden chair with silver feet, watched them advance to the assault. On his head was a stiff upright fez, on his feet saffron-tinted slippers. His mantle was purple, purple his trousers and flowing robe embroidered in white with the sacred hawks of his god Ahuramazda. He was girt with a golden zone, from which was hung his Persian sword thickly set with precious stones.

The Medes and Kissians attacked with fury. Against these lighter-armed troops the Spartans with their metal panoply and great heavy spears would have been at a terrible disadvantage. It was vital for them to keep the enemy engaged at close quarters. The tactics of Leonidas therefore were designed to effect this. His men made short rushes into the thick of the foe; feigned flights; reformed again and renewed the charge. They did this again and again. What discipline! In that narrow space, fifty feet wide, the ponderous Lacedaemonian spears of the Greek vanguard went through the wicker shields and the scale armour of the Barbarians like papyrus, while the points of the Median lances bent or broke against the solid buckler and breastplate of the Spartan hoplite.

Leonidas hardly lost a man. Still the enemy came on, yelling; their dead choked the mouth of the Pass. Hour after hour in that late-summer weather the fight raged on. Loaded with their armour, trusting much to mere superiority of physical strength as they thrust back the assailants with their shields, all that time the Spartans kept up these violent rushing tactics. And then Xerxes sent the "Immortals" at them.

These men were perfectly fresh. They greatly outnumbered, not merely the Spartans, but all the defenders of the Pass together. They were the flower of one of the great conquering armies of history. The Spartans lifted their shields again and renewed the furious fighting. They made a dreadful slaughter of the Immortals, till at the long day's end the Persians fell back, beaten and baffled. The Spartans dropped on the ground and slept like dead men.

Next day was a repetition of the day before.

Xerxes, or his generals, grew anxious. The closest co-operation with the fleet was necessary for the victualling of so numerous a host; and the fleet had failed to penetrate into the Malian Gulf. And the Pass was not yet forced.

At this critical hour a man craved audience of the King. He was a Malian Greek, a native of the region, and he knew all Oeta like one of its foxes. (Long years after, when a price was on his head, something drew him back to the scene of his immortal crime, to be slain there by no public avenger.) This fellow offered, for gold, to lead the Persians by a path he knew, which would take them by a long, steep, circuitous climb and descent to a posi-

tion in the rear of the men in the Pass. The offer was accepted eagerly.

Hydarnes, commanding the Immortals, set out under the guidance of the traitor. As they left the Persian encampment darkness was falling and lamps began here and there to glimmer. The guide led the way into the wild ravine of the Asôpos. If outside the light was failing, here it was already night. Far above their heads the men could see a star or two shining between the narrow slit where the sheer walls of the gorge seemed almost to meet, so high they were. The path, by which a laden mule could with difficulty pass, followed the course of the rushing stream over gravel and between great boulders. It was part of the old hill-road to Delphi and well known to pilgrims and bandits. It had an evil reputation. "It hath ever been put to an ill use by the Malians." (We can imagine to what sort of use our Malian had been wont to put it.) Moreover the Asôpos would sometimes rise suddenly and come roaring in spate down the gulley, flooding over the road. A sinister path.

For about three miles the Persians in Indian file threaded the ravine, which then opened out into a valley, up the slope of which they toiled, aided by their spears, along a track getting ever rougher and steeper. Sometimes the way would conduct them through a pitchy wood of firs. Now and again a man would stumble in the thick scrub or over a projecting edge of rock. Superstitious terror, begotten of the darkness upon such hills in the minds of those worshippers of Ahriman, troubled and silenced them. They emerged at last on a kind of rocky pavement. Then they descended a ravine and



climbed the opposing slope. As they climbed the darkness lifted a little ; a faint glimmer came from their golden bangles and the pomegranates of gold and silver on the butt of their spears. When they reached the summit of the path called Anopaia which they had so long been following, the dawn was clear behind the acute peak of Mount Saromata.

Anopaia was not unknown to the defenders of the Pass, and Leonidas had detached his Phocian contingent to guard it. In the silence of that windless night, in the hour before the break of day, the Phocian outposts heard a mysterious sound—a sort of light, dry, continuous roar, gradually growing nearer and louder. It was the Persians passing through an oak wood and dispersing with their feet the fallen leaves of many autumns. Suddenly the men appeared in the open. The Phocians were taken by surprise. Under a shower of arrows they retreated upon a little fort crowning a height about half a mile away. There they awaited the attack of Hydarnes. But he, neglecting these Phocians, pressed on along the path, which now began to descend, very steep and narrow. In no long time he would be on the road behind Leonidas. The Pass was turned.

While it was yet night, deserters had come to the Greeks with news of the march across the mountain. Soon after scouts came running down from the heights confirming the tale. Tradition says that Leonidas in so desperate a case bade his allies depart and save themselves ; as for himself and his men, their orders were to defend the Pass to the utmost. It has, however, been recently suggested that the

contingents which withdrew went to meet Hydarnes. If such was their purpose, either they came too late, or missed the enemy, or like the Phocians shrank from the conflict with the odds so heavy against them. At any rate they now pass out of the story. They were all the Greek forces save the Lacedaemonians, the thousand who must have composed nearly the whole fighting power of Thespiæ, and four hundred Thebans. Of these the Thebans, it is said, were retained by Leonidas as hostages, their city being tainted already with suspicion of disloyalty. Yet they may have been true men. But the Thespians stayed willingly. Even when it was known that Hydarnes could not be stopped, they chose to stay. They had no traditional code of military honour like the Spartans; their proportionate stake was twenty times greater. "Their leader was Demophilos the son of Diadromês, their bravest man was Dithyrambos the son of Harmatidas."

It was full daylight when Xerxes according to arrangement attacked. The Greeks, who hitherto had lined up behind the old wall which the Persian scout had seen drawn along the ridge of a mound within the narrowest part of the Pass, now, knowing the end was come, issued forth into the broader space beyond. Then followed a fight which men who only read of it never forget. The Barbarians came on in wave upon wave; the Greeks slew and slew. They could see the Persian officers lashing on their men with whips to the assault. Now and again one of themselves would fall with a rattle of bronze. But the enemy fell in heaps. Many were thrust into the sea and drowned; still more were

trampled to death beneath the feet of their fellows. Two brothers of Xerxes were slain.

Then Leonidas fell.

The Spartans gathered about their king and fought to rescue the body. By this time their spears were broken, and they were fighting with their swords. One of the two men who had been left behind at the base in the last stages of ophthalmia appeared, led by his servant. The helot turned the face of his master towards the enemy and fled. The blind man stumbled forward, striking wildly, until he was killed. Four times the Barbarians were driven back, and the body of Leonidas was saved.

Word came that the Immortals were on the road behind them. Therefore the Greeks changed their plan of battle and retreated to the narrower portion of the Pass; all but the Thebans, who surrendered to the foe. The men of Sparta and Thespiæ fought their way back to the mound and behind the stone wall across the mound, and there made their final stand. With cries the Barbarians swarmed about them on front and flank and rear. In a moment the wall was down. Such of the Greeks as still had swords kept using them. When their swords were gone, they fought with their bare hands; and died at last rending their enemies' flesh like wolves with their teeth.

Thus, and not more easily, did Xerxes win through the Pass.



### III

## THE ADVENTURERS

THE Greek world, like the English, was largely the creation of adventurous men. To follow in their track would be in itself a literary adventure of the most fascinating and entirely relevant to our subject, the conflict of the Greek and the Barbarian. Unfortunately for our delight the adventurers did not often write down their experiences; or if they did, their accounts have for the most part disappeared. There was a certain Pytheas of Massalia, that is Marseille, who about the time of Alexander the Great sailed up the eastern coast of England and discovered Scotland, and wrote a book about it afterwards. We should like to read that book; if only to see what he said about Scotland. But his account is lost, and we should hardly know about him at all, if it were not for a brief reference in the geographer Strabo. Pytheas seems to have got as far as the Orkney or even the Shetland Islands—one German sends him on a Polar expedition—and had something to say about a mysterious “Thule.” He remarked on the extraordinary length of the summer days in these northern latitudes, thereby provoking his fellow-countrymen to regard him as “extremely mendacious” (ψευδίστατος).

Long before the time of Pytheas one Skylax of Karyanda in Asia Minor—a Greek or half-Greek—was sent by King Darius to explore the mouths of the Indus, that “second of all the rivers which produced crocodiles.” He sailed down a river “towards the dawn and the risings of the sun into the sea and through the sea westward,” circumnavigating India. What river was that? Whatever river it was, he accomplished a wonderful thing. Skylax also wrote a book, apparently, on this voyage. There exist fragments of his *Voyage Round the Parts Without the Pillars of Heracles*. His Indian narrative might be the worst written volume in the world, but it could not fail to excite the imagination in every sentence. Sailing along a river of crocodiles in a Greek galley in the reign of Darius the King!

Skylax was an Ionian or an Ionized Carian; and this reminds us that Ionia produced the first adventurers. There went to the making of that colony a great commingling of races. The first settlers may actually have come from Crete bringing with them what they could of the dazzling Cretan civilization. Many certainly came from Greece, which had enjoyed a civilization derived from Crete. No doubt the colonists had to accept help from any quarter and adopt dubious fugitives from Dorianized Hellas and “natives”—Carians, Lydians, Leleges and the like, who had learned to speak a kind of Greek—and marry native wives, who had not even learned to do that, and who would not eat with their husbands, and persisted in a number of other irrational and unsympathetic customs. But it is possible to believe that some memory of the ancient lore was long preserved, and in particular a knowledge

of the sea-routes the Cretan ships had followed. I have argued elsewhere in this sense, venturing the suggestion that the Greek colonial empire (which started from Ionia) began in an effort to re-establish the great trading system which had its centre in early Crete. Excavators keep on discovering signs of Cretan—"Minoan" or "Mycenaean"—influences in the very places to which the Greek colonists came; and it looks as if they came because they knew the way.

The Ionian cities were nearly all maritime, and this in the fullest sense that the word suggests. The relation of Miletus, for example, to the Aegean did not less effectually mould the character of that state than the Adriatic moulded Venice. Therefore to understand Ionia we must approach her from the sea. She early discovered that this was her element. From Miletus harbour, from the shell-reddened beach of Erythrae, from Samos, from Chios, from Phokaia her ships ventured yearly farther, seeking (if we are right) to recover the old trade-connexions so long severed by the Invasions; to recover the old and, if possible, to pick up new. Ionian seamen became famous for their skill and hardihood. Not merely in the Aegean, but also in remoter waters, it soon became a common thing to see a little wooden many-oared vessel, a great eye painted on either bow (to let her see her way, of course), a touch of rouge on her cheeks; her sail set or her rowers rowing to the music of one that played on a flute. Her burden would be (for a guess) wine and olive oil and black-figured pottery, with a quantity of the glittering rubbish with which traders have always cheated natives—for the chief an embroidered belt or a woollen



garment dyed as red as possible, for his wife a bronze mirror or a necklace of glorious beads. Having reached her destination and done good business, the ship would leave behind one or two of the crew with instructions to collect and store the products of the country against her return next spring. If all went well and the natives did not suddenly attack and exterminate the foreign devils in their midst, the storehouses would increase and the settlers with them, until at last the factory seemed important enough to undergo the solemn ceremony of "foundation" (*Oikismos*) and to be called a "colony" (*Apoikia*). Normally the "foundation" meant a great influx of new settlers, and from it the colony dated its official existence. But it might have had a struggling unofficial existence quite a long time before. More likely than not it had. These settlements at the sea-ends of trade-routes are immemorially old.

Let me quote an anecdote from Herodotus. He is engaged in relating the saga of the founding of Cyrene by certain men of the Aegean island Thera, and at a point in his narrative he says of these Theraeans :

*In their wanderings they came to Crete and namely to the city of Itanos. There they meet a man that was a seller of purple, whose name was Koróbios ; who said that he had been caught in a tempest and carried to Libya, even to the island of Platea, which is part of Libya. This man they persuaded to go with them to Thera, giving him money ; and from Thera men sailed to view the land, being few in number as for the first time. But when Koróbios had guided them to this Isle Platea, they leave him there with provision*

*for certain months, and themselves set sail with all speed to report concerning the island to the Theraeans. Now when they did not return in the time agreed upon, Korôbios was left with nothing. But then a ship of Samos that was voyaging to Egypt put in at this Platea; and when the master of the ship, whose name was Kolaios, and the other Samians had heard the whole tale from Korôbios, they left him a year's food, and themselves put off from the isle, being eager to make Egypt. However, they were driven from their course by a wind out of the east. And passing out through the Pillars of Heracles they arrived at Tartessos, the wind never ceasing to blow. Thus were they marvelously led to this market, which at that time was untouched, so that these men won the greatest profit in merchandise of all Greeks of whom we surely know.*

It would be easy to write a long commentary on that story. I might invite the reader to share my admiration of an art which makes you see so much in so little. You see the lonely man on his desert island of sand and scrub, with no companions but the wild goats (if goats there were) and the sea-birds fishing among the breakers. You picture his despair as he watches his store of victuals coming to an end, with no sign of his returning shipmates; his extravagant joy when he descries a Greek vessel; the astonishment of the strangers at the sight of this Crusoe; his bursting eagerness to tell them "the whole tale"; the departure of the Samians and the belated reappearance of the Theraeans; the face of Korôbios as he goes down to meet them, thinking of the things he will say. But the point I wish more particularly to make is the significance for history of the story. Desiring to learn what

they can of the commercial possibilities of the Cyrenaica, the Theraeans come to Crete, and not only to Crete, but to that part of it where there still dwelt in the eastern corner of the long island a remnant of Eteocretans, that is "Cretans of Pure Blood," descendants of the "Minoan" Cretans, who had been such famous traders and mariners. Itanos, where Korôbios lived, was an Eteocretan town. It has been excavated and has revealed material evidence of "Minoan" culture. That the ships of Minos visited Cyrenaica any one would conjecture who looked at a map. Ethnographers and archæologists adduce arguments of their own pointing to the same conclusion. Where the Greek town of Cyrene later grew up was the end of a caravan-route of unknown age from the Oasis of Siwah to the Mediterranean. Was not trade done there by the Minoans long before it was reconstituted as a "colony" of the Theraeans? Might not some knowledge of this African market and the sea-road thither linger on among the ruined and hunted Eteocretans?

In Herodotus' account Korôbios appears to know only Platea, and it only by accident. That Eteocretan then must have felt no end of a surprise when the Samians came so opportunely to his help in the island he had "discovered." Platea is supposed to be the little island of Bomba, which gives its name to the Gulf of Bomba. The Theraeans stayed in Platea a matter of two years. Then, urged by want and the Delphian Oracle, they landed in a body on the mainland opposite the island. It was a beautiful spot called Aziris, shut in by wooded hills and nourished by a river. Here they lived six years. Then at last, guided by friendly Libyans—are not those



“friendlies” somewhat significant?—they pushed on to the site of what came to be known as the city of Cyrene. Korôbios has dropped out of the story, and the whole business looks like a bit of “peaceful penetration” into unknown country. That is the impression Herodotus wishes to convey. But it is a wrong impression, for somebody did know a remarkable amount about the Cyrenaica. The god of Delphi knew. It is he who is always urging the reluctant Theraeans from stage to stage of their advance. Herodotus, less perhaps from pious than artistic motives, emphasizes the contrast of the divine foreknowledge with the timid ignorance of men; it makes everything more dramatic. But we need not suffer ourselves to be imposed upon. For the god we substitute his ministers. The priests at Delphi had in their possession some previous information about the Libyan coast. They made a point of collecting such information. Where they got this particular piece of knowledge we do not know; but the old Homeric hymn tells how in ancient days a ship sailed from Crete to establish the oracle at Delphi.

But we have not yet exhausted the interest of that brief excerpt from Herodotus. Our thoughts travel with those Samians who, making for Egypt, were driven by contrary winds farther and farther west, until at last they passed the Straits of Gibraltar and found a superb new market at Tartessos just outside. It has been generally believed by scholars that Tartessos is the Tarshish with which, as we read in the Old Testament, King Hiram of Tyre exchanged merchandise; but of this there is now some doubt. Tartessos stood on an island at the

mouth of the Guadalquivir, and was doubtless known to the Phoenicians before the Samians got there. It is surely of it that Arnold is thinking at the end of that long simile which concludes *The Scholar Gipsy*, when he tells how the Phoenician trader after passing the Atlantic straits reaches a place where *through sheets of foam, shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come*. The discovery of the Atlantic made a profound impression on the Greek mind. Pious and conservative spirits, like Pindar, thought it wicked to venture beyond the Straits ; and indeed, it was long before any one did venture far, because, for one thing, the sort of craft which was suited to the tideless Mediterranean could not face so well the different conditions of the ocean. For another thing, the Phoenicians had got a monopoly of the British trade.

We do not know how the Samians lost the market of Tartessos, but in later times we find their fellow-countrymen the Phokaïans in possession. This privilege was the result of the friendliness of Arganthonios, King of the Tartessians, who reigned eighty years and lived to be "quite a hundred and twenty." The Phokaïans perhaps deserved their luck, for they were the most daring of all the Ionian navigators. Some of their adventures would doubtless make good reading. The Phokaïans also attract us because of all the Ionians they loved their freedom most. When Harpagos, the general of Cyrus, besieged them, rather than live even in a nominal subjection to the Persian, they launched their famous fifty-oared ships, and embarking their wives and children and furniture sailed to Chios. However, the Chians could not help them, so they decided to

go and settle in distant Corsica. But first they made a sudden descent on their city and slew the Persian garrison which had occupied it. *Then, when this had been done by them, they made strong curses against any who should remain behind of their company. And beside the curses they sank also a lump of iron and swore an oath that they would not return to Phokaia until this lump came up to light again. But as they were setting out for Corsica, more than half the people of the town were seized with longing and pity for their city and the familiar places of the land, and broke their oath and sailed back to Phokaia.* The remnant reached Corsica, where they dwelt five years. Then they fought a disastrous drawn battle with a fleet of Etruscans and Carthaginians. Once more they took on board their wives and children and property and sailed away, this time to Reggio, from which they set out again and "founded that city in the Oenotrian land which is now called Hyele," better known as Elea, a little south of Paestum.

Half a century later, when the Ionians revolted against the Persian rule, they chose for their admiral a Phokaian called Dionysios. Later they regretted their choice, considering Dionysios to be altogether too much of a disciplinarian, and would no longer take his orders. Disunion broke out among them, and they were entirely defeated at the Battle of Ladê. What did Dionysios do? He captured three of the enemy's vessels, and then, to elude pursuit, sailed into the Levant, where he sank a number of trading-barks and collected a great treasure. Then he made for Sicily, where he "set up as a buccaneer," sparing Greek ships of course,



but attacking Etruscans and Carthaginians. I suppose it *was* piracy, but at least it was Drake's sort, not Captain Kidd's. We may hope he came to a good end

There was a contemporary of Dionysios who is an even more significant figure for our understanding of Hellenism. This is Demokêdês of Kroton. The political background of the story of Demokêdês, as it is told by Herodotus, does not quite harmonize with the rest of his history, for it implies a policy towards Greece which Persia did not adopt till later. But otherwise there is no reason to doubt that things happened much as Herodotus says. Demokêdês was born at Kroton in the extreme south of Italy. It is a town famous in the history of medicine. We do not know how the medical school there originated. The earliest seems to have been in the Aegean island of Kos in connexion with the worship of Asklepios (Aesculapius), the God of Healing. Whether the physicians of Kroton had an independent tradition or not, they soon became famous. The first great name is Demokêdês. That he had a teacher we know from his words to Darius, but he has not mentioned his teacher's name. The fact is that Demokêdês was the first doctor whose personality refused to be merged in the guild to which he doubtless belonged. At Kos the guild was so powerful (it had a semi-religious character there) that it was not until the Peloponnesian War that the world heard the personal name of one of its members—Hippokratês. Thus Demokêdês corresponds to Archilochus. I am about to tell again the story of a man of genius.

*At Kroton he was always quarrelling with his father,*

*who had a violent temper. When he could not stand him any longer, he left him and went to Aegina. Settling down there, he in his first year proved his superiority to all the other doctors, although he lacked an outfit and had none of the instruments of his art. And in his second year the Aeginetans hired him for a talent paid by the State, in the third year the Athenian people hired him for a hundred silver pounds, and in the fourth year Polykratês—tyrant of Samos—for two talents.*

The instant recognition of Demokêdês is not only an indication of his genius, it shows a remarkable degree of enlightenment on the part of contemporary Greek governments. More credit belongs, no doubt, to the Aeginetans and Athenians than to Polykratês, who evidently retained the services of Demokêdês for the court at Samos. Yet Polykratês too was enlightened. Under his absolute rule or "tyranny," which is the Greek technical term, the Ionian island of Samos had become the most splendid state in Greece. *Not counting those who became tyrants of the Syracusans, there is none of all the other Greek tyrants who is fit to be compared to Polykratês in magnificence.* This position was won by sea-power. *Polykratês is the first of those Greeks we know who aimed at the Thalassocracy (the command of the sea) save Minos the Knossian and any one else who acquired the rule of the sea before Minos—an interesting remark in view of the theory that the Ionians definitely aimed at reconstituting the maritime empire of pre-historic Crete. This glittering tyrant suffered at last a reversal of fortune so strange and complete that it became a proverbial instance of the hand of God in human affairs. He was enticed to the Asiatic continent opposite his island by the Persian grandee*

Oroitês, and there treacherously seized and with nameless tortures put to death. His *entourage* became the slaves of Oroitês. One of them was Demokêdês.

Some years afterwards King Darius, who had in the meanwhile succeeded to the throne, was flung from his horse while hunting and dislocated his ankle. He entrusted his injury to the court-physicians at Susa, who were Egyptians, Egypt being the home of a very ancient body of medical lore transmitted from father to son. But the Egyptian doctors *by wrenching and forcing the foot made the evil greater. For days seven and seven nights Darius was possessed by sleeplessness by reason of the malady which beset him, but on the eighth day, when the King was in poor case, one who had caught a report in Sardis before he came to Susa of the skill of Demokêdês of Kroton made report to Darius; and he commanded that he be brought before him with all speed. And when they had discovered him among the slaves of Oroitês in some neglected corner, they brought him into the presence dragging his fetters and clothed in rags. And as he stood there Darius asked him if he understood the art; but he would not admit it, fearing that, if he discovered himself, he would lose Hellas altogether. But Darius perceived clearly that he understood the art, but was feigning, and he commanded the men who had brought him to bring forth pricks and goads. Then indeed Demokêdês discovers himself, saying that he had no accurate knowledge of the matter, but having been the disciple of a leech he had some poor knowledge of that skill. Afterwards when he had entrusted himself to him, by using Greek remedies and applying mild cures after the violent he caused him*



*to get sleep, and in short space restored him to sound health, that no longer hoped to have his foot whole again. For a gift thereafter Darius bestows on him two pairs of golden fetters ; but Demokêdês asked him if he thus doubled his misfortunes for a gift, just because he had made him whole. Darius was pleased at the speech and sends him to his wives. And the eunuchs who led him there said to the women that this was the man who had given back his life to the King. And each of them, plunging a cup in the chest of gold, gave Demokêdês so rich a gift that his servant, whose name was Skiton, following him gathered up the nobles that fell from the cups, and a great deal of gold was amassed by him.*

*Then Demokêdês having healed Darius had a very great house at Susa, and sat at table with the King, and had all else save one thing only, namely his return to the Greeks. And the Egyptian physicians, who formerly tended the King, when they were about to be impaled on the stake for that they had been overcome by a Greek physician, he both saved by his prayers to the King, and also rescued a prophet of Elis, who had followed Polykratês, and was neglected among the slaves. And Demokêdês was a very great matter with the King.*

Herodotus is so interesting that it is almost inexcusable to interrupt him ; but the essayist has to study brevity. I will therefore in the main summarize what follows, indulging myself in only one remark (which has probably already occurred to my reader) that of course the story has passed through the popular imagination, and that the historian has to admire, not so much the caprice of destiny, as the genius of an indomitable personality.

Shortly after the accident to Darius, his queen

Atossa was afflicted by an ulcer on her breast. Atossa was an unspeakably great lady. She was the daughter of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire. She had been the wife of the son and successor of Cyrus, her brother Cambyses. Now she was the wife of Darius and the mother of Xerxes. Darius himself may well have been a little in awe of her. She outlived him, if we may believe Aeschylus, who has introduced her into his play of *The Persians*, uttering magnificent stately lamentations over the ruin of the Persian cause in Hellas, and evoking from his royal tomb the ghost of the "god" Darius. Such was the half-divine woman, who was to help Demokêdês back to the Greece for which he felt so deep a nostalgia. A single touch of Herodotus makes her as real as any patient you have seen in a hospital. *So long as the thing was comparatively little she concealed it and being ashamed of it did not tell anybody, but when she was seriously ill she sent for Demokêdês.* He cured her after extracting a promise, which she fulfilled in the following manner. She persuaded Darius to plan an expedition against Greece and, as an aid to this, to send Demokêdês to make a report on his native country. The King then summoned fifteen Persians of distinction and instructed them to accompany Demokêdês on the projected voyage along the coasts of Hellas in quest of intelligence, commanding them on no account to let Demokêdês escape. Next he sent for his healer and explained the nature of the employment to which he designed to put him. He bade Demokêdês take all his movable possessions with him as presents for his father and his brethren, promising to requite him many times

over. Demokêdês declined this offer, that he might not betray himself by too manifest an eagerness. He did accept the gift of a merchant-vessel freighted with "goods of every sort" for his "brethren"—and for his father too, we may hope, that irascible old man.

The expedition went first to Sidon, where they fitted out two triremes and the merchant-vessel freighted with goods of every sort, then sailed for Greece. They touched at various points of the coast, spying out the land and writing down an account of what seemed most remarkable. In this way they came at last to Tarentum in Italy. There Demokêdês got in touch with Aristophilidês, whom Herodotus calls the "king" of the Tarentines. Aristophilidês removed the steering-apparatus of the foreign ships, which prevented their sailing, and imprisoned the crew as spies; while Demokêdês took advantage of their predicament to escape to his native Kroton. Then Aristophilidês released the Persians and gave them back their rudders. They at once sailed in pursuit of their prisoner, and found him at Kroton "holding the attention of the Agora," which was the centre of Greek city-life. There they sought to lay hands on him. And some of the men of Kroton, fearing the might of Persia, would have yielded him up, but others gat hold of him on their part, and began to beat the Persians with their staves; who made profession in such words as these: "Ye men of Kroton, consider what ye do; ye are taking from us a man that is a runaway slave of the King. How then shall King Darius be content to have received this insult? And how shall your deeds serve you well, if ye drive us away? Against what city shall



*we march before this, and what city shall we try to enslave before yours ? ”* So spake they, but they did not indeed persuade the men of Kroton, but had Demokêdês rescued out of their hands, and the merchantman, which they had brought with them, taken away from them, and so sailed back to Asia ; neither did they seek any further knowledge concerning Greece, though this was the object of their coming ; for they had lost their guide. Now as they were putting forth, Demokêdês charged them with no message but this, bidding them tell Darius “ Demokêdês is married to Milo’s daughter.” For the name of Milo the wrestler was of great account with the King. I think that Demokêdês hurried on this marriage, paying a great sum, in order that Darius might see clearly that in his own country also Demokêdês was a great man.

The explanation of Herodotus is convincing. Demokêdês was suffering from repressed egotism. He had had wealth and consideration in Persia, but he could not breathe its spiritual atmosphere. It is pleasant to reflect that in the court of Susa he may have regretted his father. To the Hellenic mind it was a chief curse in Barbarism that it swamps the individual. How shall a man possess his soul in a land where the slavery of all but One is felt to be a *natural* state of things ? So in ancient Greece it was above all else personality that counted ; freedom was a merely external matter unless it meant the liberation of the spirit, the development (as our jargon expresses it) of personality—although this development realized itself most effectively in the service of the State. Greek history is starred with brilliant idiosyncrasies—Demokêdês being one, whom we may now leave triumphant there at home

in his flaming Persian robe, "holding the attention of the Agora" with his amazing story.

It would be too strange an omission to say nothing about that which, before Alexander's tremendous march, is the most familiar of all Greek adventures among the Barbarians; I mean that suffered and described by Xenophon the Athenian. Again we witness the triumph of a personality, although that is not the important thing about the Retreat of the Ten Thousand. The important thing is the triumph of the Greek character in a body of rascal mercenaries. The personality of the young gentleman who gained so much authority with them found its opportunity in a crisis among ignorant men, but it never became a great one. To the last it was curiously immature. Perhaps it would be an apter metaphor to say of Xenophon what some one said of Pitt—"He did not grow, he was cast." His natural tastes were very much those of a more generous and incomparably greater man, Sir Walter Scott. They were the tastes of a country gentleman with a love of literature and history, especially with a flavour of romance. The *Cyropaedia* is the false dawn of the Historic Novel. Both Xenophon and Sir Walter wanted, probably more than anything else, to be soldiers. But Xenophon wanted to be too many things. Before his mind floated constantly the image of the "Archical Man"—the ideal Ruler—who had long exercised the thoughts of Greek philosophers, of none perhaps more than Socrates, whose pupil Xenophon professed himself to be. One day it seems to have struck him: Might not he, Xenophon, be the Archical Man? He may not have framed the thought so precisely, for it is of

the kind that even youth does not always admit to itself; but the thought was there. It was his illusion. He was not born to command, he was born to write. He did not dominate, he was always more or less under the influence of some one else—Socrates, Cyrus, Agesilaos. He was an incredibly poor judge of men and the movement of affairs. But put a pen in his hands and you have, if not one of the great masters, yet a master in a certain vivid manner of his own.

He can have been little more than a boy when Fate sent him his incomparable adventure. The King of Persia had died leaving two sons, his heir and successor Artaxerxes, and Cyrus, the favourite of their dreadful mother, the dowager queen Parysatis. The younger son began secretly to collect and mobilize an army in Asia Minor, where authority had been delegated to him, intending to march without declaration of war against Artaxerxes. Xenophon was introduced to Cyrus by Proxenos of Boeotia, who indeed had induced him to visit Sardis. Proxenos, says his friend, *thought it was sufficient for being and being thought an Archical Man to praise him who did well and to refrain from praising the wrongdoer. Consequently the nice people among those who came into contact with him liked him, but he suffered from the designs of the unscrupulous, who felt that they could do what they pleased with him.* Xenophon appears to have fallen immediately under the spell of Cyrus, who undoubtedly has somewhat the air of a man of genius and who, as a scion of the Achæmenids, would in any case have inspired in him much the same feeling as a Bourbon inspired in Sir Walter Scott. In the army of invasion was a large body



of Greek mercenary soldiers, chiefly from the Peloponnese, under the command of a hard-bitten Spartan *condottiere* called Klearchos. Xenophon joined this force as a volunteer. He believed at the time, as did Proxenos, who was one of the "generals" (*Strategi*), and indeed everybody except Klearchos, who was in the secret, that the expedition was preparing against the Pisidians, hill-tribes delighting in brigandage. It was not until the army had passed the "Cilician Gates" of the Taurus and had reached Tarsus that the Greek troops found confirmed their growing suspicion that they were being led against the King. They protested and refused to go farther. Their discontent was allayed with difficulty, but it is clear that Xenophon had already made up his mind. He went with the rest. They threaded the "Syrian Gates" of the range called Amanus, and struck across the desert. Having reached the Euphrates, they followed the river into "Babylonia," what we call Mesopotamia, as far as Kunaxa, in the region where the two great streams begin to open out again after coming so close in the neighbourhood of Bagdad. At Kunaxa the Great King met them with an enormous army. A huge disorderly battle followed, in which the Greeks very easily dispersed everything that met them—but Cyrus was slain.

What were they to do? The whole purpose of the campaign—to put Cyrus on the throne—had vanished. It was clear to them that they could not rely on the Barbarians who had marched with them the two thousand miles from Sardis. Nothing to do but retreat. But retreat by the way they had come was no longer possible, since they had

eaten up the country. It remained to follow the line of the Tigris up into Armenia, and so cross—in the winter—that savage plateau, in the hope of coming at last to Trebizond, away there on the Euxine, all those leagues away.

So they set out. It was the first requirement of their plan to cross Babylonia to the Tigris. Breaking up their camp at dawn, they were alarmed in the afternoon by the sight of horses, which at first they took for Persian cavalry, but soon discovered to be baggage-animals out at grass. That in itself was surprising—it seemed the King's encampment must be near. They continued their advance, and at sunset the vanguard entered and took up their quarters in some deserted and pillaged huts, while the rest of the army, with much shouting in the darkness, found such accommodation outside as they could. That was a night of panics. An inexplicable uproar broke out in camp, which Klearchos allayed by proclaiming a reward for information against "the individual who let loose the donkey." The enemy, as appeared in the morning, had been equally nervous. At least he had vanished from the neighbourhood. Moreover heralds now appeared offering a truce from the King. The offer was accepted under promise that the Greek army would be provisioned. So the host set out again under the guidance of the King's messengers through a country all criss-crossed by irrigation-ditches, looking suspiciously full of water for the time of year. However, they soon reached some villages full of food and drink. There were some dates . . . "like amber," says Xenophon reminiscently. (He had got no breakfast that morning.) Here also

they tasted "the brain of the palm"—the "cabbage"—delicious, but it gave them a headache.

In these excellent villages they remained three days and continued negotiations with Tissaphernes, the subtle representative of the King. As a result of the conversations they moved on again under the satrap's direction as far as the towering "Wall of Media," which crossed the land in a diagonal line towards Babylon, being twenty feet broad, a hundred feet high, and twenty leagues long. From the Wall they marched between twenty and thirty miles, crossing canals and ditches, until they struck the Tigris at Sittakê, where they encamped in a "paradise" full of trees. At the bridge of Sittakê met the roads to Lydia and Armenia, to Susa and Ecbatana (Hamadan). Next morning the Greeks crossed without opposition and advanced as far as a considerable stream traversed by a bridge at "Opis," near which populous centre they found themselves observed by a large force of Asiatics. Thereupon Klearchos led his men past in column two abreast, now marching and now halting them. Every time the vanguard stopped the order to halt went echoing down the line, and had barely died out in the distance when the advance was resumed; *so that even to the Greeks themselves the army seemed enormous, while the Persian looking on was astounded.*

They were now in "Media"—really Assyria—a very different country from the "Garden of Eden" they had left on the other side of the Tigris. They marched and marched, and at last reached a cluster of dwellings called the "Villages of Parysatis." Then another twenty leagues to the town of Kainai and the confluence of the Tigris with the Greater



Zab, on whose bank they rested three days. All this time the enemy, although never attacking, had been following in a watchful cloud. Klearchos therefore sought an interview with Tissaphernes to discover his intentions. The satrap responded with Oriental courtesy and invited to a discussion at his headquarters Klearchos and the other generals, namely Proxenos, Menon, Agias and Socrates the Achaean. With grave misgivings, relying on the faith of the Barbarian, they entered the Persian camp. There they were immediately arrested. The officers who had accompanied the generals were cut down, and the Persian cavalry galloped out over the plain, killing every Greek they could find. The Hellenes from their camp could make out that something unusual was happening in that distant cloud of horse, but what it was they never guessed until Nikarchos the Arcadian came tearing along with his hands upon a great wound in his belly, holding in his entrails. He told them his story ; they ran to arm themselves. However, the enemy did not come on. Meanwhile the generals were sent to the King, who had them beheaded.

As for the leaderless men, *few of them tasted food that evening, only a few kindled a fire, many did not trouble to return to their quarters at all, but lay down where each happened to find himself, unable to close their eyes for misery and longing for the home-town, and father, and mother, and the wife, and the baby.* Xenophon got a little sleep at last, and as he slept he dreamed that his father's house was struck by a thunderbolt and set on fire. The dream was so vivid that he awoke and began to ponder what it might signify. His excited imagination revived

in still more startling colours the terrors of the situation. Here was the stage set for a moving scene. Where was the hero? Where was the Archical Man? Here at last was the opportunity he had prayed for. There was kindled that night in Xenophon the flame of a resolution which, while it lasted, did really keep at the heroic pitch a spirit secretly doubtful of itself. It was the sense of drama acting on an artistic temperament; and of course that army, being Greek, accepted the miracle and naturally assumed its rôle. The gentleman ranker developed a Napoleonic energy, and made eloquent speeches (for which he dressed very carefully); with the result that he was chosen one of the new generals. He became in fact henceforward the leading spirit, and was entrusted with the most difficult task—the command of the rearguard in a fighting retreat. He made mistakes; he was not a Napoleon. But the distinguished French officer who has written the best military history of the Retreat gives him high credit for his grasp of the principles of war, which General Boucher believes he learned from Socrates. Perhaps you have not thought of Socrates as an authority on the art of war?

Next morning they crossed the Zab—it was the dry season—but had not advanced far on the other side when they were overtaken by a small force of horsemen, archers and slingers under the command of a certain Mithradates. These approached in a seeming-friendly manner until they were fairly near, when all at once they began to ply their bows and slings. The Greek army, marching in hollow square, could not retaliate. A charge failed to capture a single man, the enemy retiring before the

charge and shooting as they retired, according to the " Parthian " tactics which were to become famous in Roman times. That day the Greeks covered little more than three miles. Clearly something must be done about it. Xenophon discovered that the army contained some Rhodians, who could sling leaden bullets twice as far as the Persians could cast their stones, which were " as big as your fist." These Rhodians then were formed overnight into a special corps and instructed in their task. Next day the host set out earlier than usual, for they had to cross a ravine, where an attack would be especially dangerous. When they were about a mile beyond, Mithradates crossed after them with a thousand horsemen and four thousand archers and slingers. No sooner had he come within range than a bugle rang out and the special troops rushed to close quarters. The enemy did not await the charge, but fled back to the ravine pursued by a small body of mounted men for whom Xenophon had somehow collected horses. It was a brilliant little victory, stained by the infamy of some, who mutilated the dead—a thing so startlingly un-Greek that I cannot remember another historical instance. And here what was done was not done in cold blood.

In the evening of that day they came to a great deserted city, the name of which was Larissa. A great city ; it was girdled by a wall two leagues in length, twenty-five feet in thickness, and a hundred feet high. Hard by was a pyramid of stone two hundred feet in height, where the Greeks found many fugitives who had sought refuge there from the neighbouring villages. Their next march brought them to another great empty fortress, called Mespila, opposite what



we now call Mosul. Somewhere in this region of Larissa and Mosul had anciently stood the enormous city of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria; and the whole district (as one gathers from Xenophon) was full of dim legends of an overwhelming disaster. The soldiers were marching over the grave of an empire. Even the fragments were imposing. Mespila was based on a kind of ring, fifty feet broad and fifty feet high, built all of a polished stone "full of shells"; and on this foundation rose a wall of bricks, the breadth of it fifty feet, and the height four hundred, and the circuit six leagues.

Beyond Mespila Tissaphernes attacked again with what appeared a very large force. But his light-armed troops were no match for the Rhodian slingers and the Cretan bowmen, whose every shot told in the dense array of the enemy, who withdrew discomfited. The Greek army was now approaching the mountains, which they had long seen towering on the horizon. It appeared to the generals that the "hollow square" must be replaced by a new formation better suited to the narrow ways they would soon be following, and this they now devised. They were to use it successfully henceforward.

They came in sight of a "palace surrounded by villages." The way to it, they observed with joy, led across a series of knolls where (thought they) the Persian cavalry could not come at them. Their joy was short-lived, for no sooner had the light-armed troops who composed the Greek rearguard begun to leave the summit of the first height than the enemy rushed up after them, and began showering darts and arrows and stones from the sling upon them, and so put them out of action for that day. The

heavy-armed did their best. But they were naturally unable to overtake the skirmishers, and it went hard with the army until special tactics were devised which answered their purpose. The knolls which had served them so ill were foothills of a loftier line of heights running parallel to the road. A sufficient detachment was sent to occupy and move along the heights simultaneously with the main body advancing by the road. Afraid of being caught between two forces, the Persian did not attack. This was the first employment of a manœuvre which the Greeks repeated many times, and always with success.

The Palace and Villages turned out to be full of bread and wine and fodder collected by the satrap of the region. So the Greeks halted there for three days, resting their wounded. Having set out again on the fourth day, they were overtaken by the implacable Tissaphernes and, warned by experience, made for the nearest village, where they beat off his attack very easily. That night they took advantage of an unmilitary practice of the Persians in never encamping less than seven miles from an enemy, to steal a march on them. The result was that the next day, and the day after, and the day after that, they proceeded on their way unmolested. On the fourth day they came to a place where the Zacho Dag, which they had kept so long on their right, sends down a spur to the river, which it steeply overhangs in a tall cliff picturesquely crowned today by a native village. The Tigris being still unfordable, the road is forced to climb over the cliff. Cheirisophos, commanding the van, halted and sent a message to Xenophon, who was in command of the rear. This was highly inconvenient to Xenophon,

because at that very moment who should appear on the road behind him but Tissaphernes? However, Xenophon galloped to the front and requested an explanation. Cheirisophos pointed to the cliff, and there sure enough were armed men in occupation. Between these and Tissaphernes the army was in a perilous position. What to do? Xenophon, looking up at the wall of the Zacho Dag, noticed that the main height at this part of the range was directly opposite them; looking again, he could make out a track leading from this peak to the cliff. He immediately proposed to seize the peak. A picked force was hastily got together, and off they set upon their climb. No sooner did the men on the cliff catch sight of them than they too began to race for the key-position. With shouts the two sides strained for the goal. Xenophon rode beside his men, encouraging them. A grumbling fellow from Sicyon complained that he had to run with a shield while the general rode on a horse. Xenophon dismounted, pushed the man out of the ranks, took his shield from him, and struggled on in his place. Thus enkindled, the Greeks—the men to whom mountains were native—reached the summit first. But it was a near thing.

Thus the pass was turned. But the situation remained not less than dreadful. On the right of the army arose the cruel mountains of Kurdistan; on their left ran swiftly the profound current of the Tigris. A soldier from Rhodes suggested crossing the stream on an arrangement of inflated skins, such as appears to be still in use upon the Tigris, where it is called a "tellek." The suggestion was impracticable in face of the enemy, who was found



in possession of the opposing bank. Reluctantly therefore they turned their backs upon the river and set their minds upon the mountains. Under cover of darkness they stole across the plain and were on the high ground with the dawn. They were now in the country of the Kardouchians, whom we now call the Kurds, in whose intricate valleys and startling ravines whole armies had been lost. On the appearance of the Greeks the natives fled with their wives and children from their villages and "took to the heather." The invaders requisitioned the supplies they found, but made some effort to conciliate the highlanders. These remained sullenly unresponsive. All day long they watched the ten thousand hoplites with the light-armed and the women of the camp struggle through the high pass. Then as the last men were descending in the early-gathering darkness the Kardouchians stirred. Stones and arrows flew, and some of the Greeks were killed. Luckily for the army the enemy had been surprised so completely that no concerted attack was made in the steep-walled road. As it was, although they bivouacked that night without further annoyance, they could see the signal fires blaze from every peak, boding ill for the morrow.

When it came they resolved to leave behind all prisoners and all they could spare of the baggage-train. Thus disencumbered, they set forward in stormy weather and under constant attack, so that little progress was made. Finally they came to a complete check. In front of them rose the sheer side of a mountain, up which the road was seen to climb, black with their enemies. A frontal attack was not to be thought of. But was there no byway

across the heights? A captured Kurd confessed that there was. Only at one point this path led over an eminence, which must be secured in advance. Therefore late in the afternoon a storming party set out with the guide, their orders being to occupy the eminence in the night, and sound a bugle at dawn. A violent rainstorm served to conceal this movement, whose success was also aided by the advance of Cheirisophos along the visible road. He soon reached a gulch, which his men must cross to gain a footing on the great cliff. But when they attempted the passage the enemy rolled down enormous boulders, which shattered themselves into flying fragments against the iron sides of the ravine, so that crossing was merely impossible. The attempt then was not at that time renewed. But through the night the Greeks continued to hear the thunder of the plunging rocks sent down by the unwearied and suspicious foe.

Meanwhile the storm-troops who had gone by the circuitous path surprised a guard of Kardouchians seated about a fire, and, having dispersed them, held the position under the impression that it was the "col" or eminence. In this they were mistaken, but at dawn they realized their error and set out in a friendly mist to seize their true objective. Its defenders fled as soon as the Greek trumpet sang out the attack. In the road below Cheirisophos heard the sound and rushed to the assault of the cliff. His men struggled up as best they might, hoisting one another by means of their spears. The rearguard, under Xenophon, followed the bypath. They captured one crest by assault, only to find themselves confronted by another Xenophon there-

fore left a garrison on the first, and with the rest of his force attacked and captured the second—only to find a third rising before them, being in fact the eminence itself. That also was assailed. To the surprise of the Greeks the enemy made no resistance and made off at once. Soon a fugitive came to Xenophon with the news that the crest where he had left a garrison had been stormed, and all its defenders slain—all who had not escaped by jumping down its rocky sides. It was now evident why the Kardouchians had left the main eminence; they had seen from their greater elevation what was happening in Xenophon's rear. They now came back to a height facing the eminence and began discussing a truce, while gradually they were collecting their people. An agreement was reached, and the Greeks began to descend from their position, when instantly the Barbarians were on them, yelling and rolling down boulders after them. However, with little difficulty now, a junction was effected with Cheirisophos.

In all a week was consumed in traversing the land of the Kardouchians, and not a day passed without hard fighting. Every narrow way was beset by the fierce mountaineers, who shot arrows two cubits long from bows so mighty that the archer had to use one foot to get a purchase on his weapon. One man was pierced through shield and breastplate and body, another was shot fairly through the head. In these mountains the Greeks "suffered more than all they had endured at the hands of the King and Tissaphernes." Fighting their way along the Zorawa, they reached at last the more open ground, where that river falls into the Bohtan Su, which



Xenophon calls the Kentritês. Alas, in the morning light they saw the further bank lined with hostile forces, both foot and horse, while on the mountains they had just escaped the Kardouchians were gathered, ready to fall on their rear, if they should attempt the passage of the Kentritês, a deep river full of big slippery stones. Gloom settled again upon the host. But in a little time, while Xenophon was still at breakfast, there ran to him two young men with great news. The pair of them had gone to collect sticks, and, down by the river, they had noticed on the other side "among rocks that came right down to the water an old man and a woman putting away in a kind of cave what looked like a bag of clothes." So the soldiers put their knives between their teeth and prepared to swim across. To their surprise they got to the other side without the need of swimming. Now here they were back again, having brought the clothes for evidence.

Shortly afterwards they were guiding the division of Cheirisophos to the ford they had so opportunely discovered, while Xenophon led the rearguard, whose duty it was to protect the passage of the army from the assaults of the Kardouchians. These were duly made, but were beaten off and eluded; and the Kentritês was crossed.

The Greeks were now in Armenia. Before them stretched a wide rolling plateau, sombre, lonely, savagely inclement at that season; and yet they found it at first like Elysium after their torments up among the clouds. They crossed two streams, the Bitlis Tchai, by whose deep trench the caravans still travel, and the Kara Su. It was in the country of the satrap Tiribazos, who kept following the

invaders with an army. So the march went on. One night they reached the usual "palace surrounded by villages," and there, finding plenty to eat and drink, with joy refreshed their weariness. It was judged imprudent to billet the men out among the villages, so they bivouacked in the open. Then the snow came—a soft, persistent snow; and in the morning nothing seemed desirable except to remain warm and drowsy under that white blanket. At last Xenophon sprang up, and began to chop wood, so that the men were shamed and got up too, and took the log from him, and kindled fires, and anointed themselves with a local unguent. But all were certain that such another night would be the death of them; so it was resolved that they should find quarters among the villages. Off rushed the soldiers with cheers.

But the retreat must proceed. They caught a man who told them that Tiribazos meant to attack them in a high defile upon their road. This stroke they anticipated and, crossing the pass, marched day after day in a wilderness of snow. At one point in their dreadful journey they waded up to their waists across the icy waters of the upper Euphrates. The snow got deeper and deeper. Worst of all the wind—the north wind—blew in their faces. The snow became six feet deep. Baggage-cattle, slaves, some thirty of the soldiers themselves disappeared in the drifts. At last by the mercy of the gods the wind dropped a little, and they found an abundance of wood, which they burned, and so cleared spaces in the snow, that they might sleep upon the ground. Then they must bestir themselves and labour on again. Men began

to drop from hunger-faintness. Xenophon got them a mouthful to eat; whereupon they got on their legs and stumbled forward with the rest. All the time bands of marauders prowled about the skirts of the army. If a beast were abandoned, they swooped down upon it, and shortly you would hear them quarrelling over the carcase. Not only the beasts were lost, but every now and then a man would fall out because of frostbite or snow-blindness. Once a whole bunch of soldiers dropped behind, and, seeing a dark patch where a hot spring had melted the snow, they sat down there. Xenophon implored them to get up; wolfish enemies were at their heels. Nothing he could say moved them. Then he lost his temper. The only result was a tired suggestion from the men that he should cut their throats. Darkness was falling; nearer and nearer came the clamour of the pillagers wrangling over their spoils. Xenophon and his men lay concealed in the bare patch, which sloped down into a cañon smoking with the steam of the hot spring. When the miscreants came near, up sprang the soldiers with a shout, while the outworn men whooped at the pitch of their voices. The startled enemy "flung themselves down the snow into the cañon, and not one ever uttered a sound again."

Not long after, the Greeks came to some villages, one of which was assigned to Xenophon and his men. It was occupied so rapidly that the inhabitants had not time to escape. An extraordinary village it was, for the houses were all underground. You entered the earth-house at a hole "like the mouth of a well," and, descending a ladder, found yourself in a fine roomy chamber, shared impartially by



“goats and sheep and cows and poultry” as well as people. There was store of provender for the animals, and wheat and barley and greens for folk. There was also “barley-wine,” which you sucked through a reed, and which was “a very delightful beverage to one who had learned to like it.” Xenophon naturally lived with the headman of the village, whom he graciously invited to dinner at the expense of the house. He managed to reassure the headman, who was troubled about many things, including the capture of his daughter, who had just been married. So the wine was produced, and they made a night of it. Next morning, awakening among the cocks and the hens and the other creatures, Xenophon went to call on Cheirisophos, taking the headman with him. On the way they looked in at all the houses and in each they found high revelry. They were forced to come down the ladder and have breakfast. Xenophon has forgotten how many breakfasts he had that morning, but he remembers lamb, kid, pork, veal and poultry, not to mention varieties of bread. If anybody proposed to drink somebody’s health, he was haled to the bowl and made to shove in his head and “make a noise like an ox drinking.” To the headman the soldiers offered “anything he would like.” (When you think of it, they could scarcely do less.) The poor man chose any of his relations whom he noticed. At the headquarters of Cheirisophos there were similar scenes. The soldiers in their Greek way had wreathed their heads for the feast, making wisps of hay serve the purpose of flowers, and had formed the Armenian boys “in their strange clothes” into picturesque waiters. Xenophon took seventeen magnificent young

horses which his village had been rearing for the King, and divided them among his officers, keeping the best for himself. In return he presented the headman with an oldish steed of his own, which he rather thought was going to die.

After a jolly week the weary retreat began again. The headman told the Greeks to tie bags upon the feet of their horses to keep them from falling through the frozen surface of the snow. He went as guide with Cheirisophos in the van. As they marched on and on, never coming to a human habitation, the general flew into a rage and struck the guide. Next morning they found that the man had disappeared in the night. This turned out to be the worst thing that had befallen them yet. After a week of padding the hoof over a white desert with no relief for the eyes but their own red rags, they came to a river. It was the Araxes, and if they had taken the right turn here, a few days more would have brought them to Trebizond. Unfortunately, misled perhaps by the sound of the native name, they got it into their heads that the river was the Phasis, about which everybody knew that it flowed through the land of the Colchians into the Black Sea. Therefore they went *down* the Araxes.

Fighting began at the very outset. Moreover provisions soon failed them. They were now in the wild country of the "Taochians," who lived in strong places, where they had stored all their supplies. The army must capture one of these strongholds or starve. The first they came to was typical. It was simply an enclosed space on the top of a precipice. A winding stream served as a moat. There was only one narrow way of approach to

the stockade, and this path was commanded by an insuperable cliff. Within the stockade huddled a throng of men and women and animals. On the top of the cliff were Taochian warriors, who flung stones and precipitated rocks on any Greek who ventured to set foot on the path. Several who ventured had their legs broken or their ribs crushed. Some shelter was afforded by a wood of tall pines, through which about seventy soldiers filtered, until no more than fifty or so feet of open ground lay between them and the stockade. An officer called Kallimachos began to amuse the army by popping out and into the wood, thus drawing the fire of the stoners, who let fly at him with "more than ten cart-loads of rock." Then, in a lull of the stones, two or three made a sudden dash across the exposed ground and into the stockade. The rest followed at their heels. Then occurred a very horrible thing. The women flung their babies down the precipice and jumped after them. A sort of heroic madness swept the helpless defenders. Aeneas of Stymphalos gripped a man who had a splendid dress on; the man flung his arms about Aeneas and took him with him over the cliff. Hardly any were saved.

Now the ten thousand entered the country of the Chalybians, the bravest race they met on all their march; whose strongholds the Greeks did not take. The Chalybians, who wore an immense tasselled breastplate of linen, and carried a prodigious long spear and a short sword, used to cut off the heads of their enemies and go into battle, swinging the heads, and singing and dancing. Having escaped from such savages, the army crossed a river and marched many parasangs, turning west by a



route that led them perhaps by way of the modern towns of Alexandropol and Kars to a populous city by Xenophon named Gymnias, which must have been near Erzerum. Here they found a guide, who promised to set them on the true road home. Him they followed for four days. On the fifth day Xenophon, who as usual was in command of the rearguard, heard a great and distant shouting. At once he and his men concluded that the van had been attacked, for the whole country was up in arms. Every moment the far-off clamour increased. As they stared at the mountain-side, which the van had just ascended, they noticed that, whenever a company had got a certain distance, the men suddenly took to their heels and tore up the mountain for their lives. It was clear that something extraordinary was happening. Xenophon sprang on his horse and, followed by the cavalry, galloped to the rescue. But now in a little they could hear what they were crying on the mountain; it was *The Sea! The Sea!* Then the rearguard also ran, and the baggage-animals and the horses too! And on the top they fell to embracing one another, officers and men indiscriminately, and the tears ran down their faces. Then they raised a great cairn of stones on that hill-top, overlooking "the col of Vavoug," where the road still passes.

## IV

### ELEUTHERIA

WHAT was the special gift of Greece to the world? The answer of the Greeks themselves is unexpected, yet it is as clear as a trumpet: *Eleutheria*, Freedom. The breath of *Eleutheria* fills the sail of Aeschylus' great verse, it blows through the pages of Herodotus, awakens fierce regrets in Demosthenes and generous memories in Plutarch. "Art, philosophy, science," the Greeks say, "yes, we have given all these; but our best gift, from which all the others were derived, was *Eleutheria*."

Now what did they mean by that?

They meant *the Reign of Law*. Aeschylus says of them in *The Persians*:

ATOSSA. *Who is their shepherd over them and lord of their host?*

CHORUS. *Of no man are they called the slaves or subjects.*

Now hear Herodotus amplifying and explaining Aeschylus. *For though they are free, yet are they not free in all things. For they have a lord over them, even Law, whom they fear far more than thy people fear thee. At least they do what that lord biddeth them, and what he biddeth is still the same, to wit that they flee not before the face of any multitude*

*in battle, but keep their order and either conquer or die.* It is Demaratos that speaks of the Spartans to King Xerxes.

Eleutheria the Reign of Law or *Nomos*. The word *Nomos* begins with the meaning "custom" or "convention," and ends by signifying that which embodies as far as possible the universal and eternal principles of justice. To write the history of it is to write the history of Greek civilization. The best we can do is to listen to the Greeks themselves explaining what they were fighting for in fighting for Eleutheria. They will not put us off with abstractions.

No one who has read *The Persians* forgets the live and leaping voice that suddenly cries out before the meeting of the ships at Salamis: *Onward, Sons of the Hellenes! Free your country, free your children, your wives, your fathers' tombs and seats of your fathers' gods! All hangs now on your fighting!* This, then, when it came to action, is what the Greeks meant by the Reign of Law. It will not seem so puzzling if you put it in this way: that what they fought for was the right to govern themselves. Here as elsewhere we may observe how the struggle of Greek and Barbarian fills with palpitating life such words as Freedom, which to dull men have been apt to seem abstract and to sheltered people faded. For the Barbarians had not truly laws at all. How are laws possible where "all are slaves save one," and he responsible to nobody? So the fight for Freedom becomes a fight for Law, that no man may become another's master, but all be subject equally to the Law, "whose service is perfect freedom."



That conception was wrought out in the stress of conflict with the Barbarians, culminating in the Persian danger. On that point it is well to prepare our minds by an admission. The quarrel was never a simple one of right and wrong. Persia at least was in some respects in advance of the Greece she fought at Salamis; and not only in material splendour. That is now clear to every historian; it never was otherwise to the Greeks themselves. Possessing or possessed by the kind of imagination which compels a man to understand his enemy, they saw much to admire in the Persians—their hardihood, their chivalry, their munificence, their talent for government. The Greeks heard with enthusiasm (which was part at least literary) the scheme of education for young nobles—"to ride a horse, to shoot with the bow, and to speak the truth!" In fact the two peoples, although they never realized it, were neither in race nor in speech very remote from one another. But it was the destiny of the Persians to succeed to an empire essentially Asiatic and so to become the leaders and champions of a culture alien to Greece and to us. In such a cause their very virtues made them the more dangerous. Here was no possible compromise. Persia and Greece stood for something more than two political systems; the European mind, the European way of thinking and feeling about things, the soul of Europe was at stake. There is no help for it; in such a quarrel we must take sides.

Let us look first at the Persian side. The phrase I quoted about all men in Persia being slaves save one is not a piece of Greek rhetoric; it was the official language of the empire. The greatest officer

of state next to the King was still his "slave" and was so addressed by him. The King was lord and absolute. An inscription at Persepolis reads *I am Xerxes the Great King, the King of Kings, the King of many-tongued countries, the King of this great universe, the Son of Darius the King, the Achæmenid. Xerxes the Great King saith: "By grace of Ahuramazda I have made this portal whereon are depicted all the countries."* The Greek orator Aeschines says, "He writes himself Lord of men from the rising to the setting sun." The letter of Darius to Gadatas—it exists to-day—is addressed by "Darius the son of Hystaspes, King of Kings." That, as we know, was a favourite title. The law of the land was summed up in the sentence: *The King may do what he pleases.* Greece saved us from that.

No man might enter the sacred presence without leave. Whoever was admitted must prostrate himself to the ground. The emperor sat on a sculptured throne holding in his hand a sceptre tipped with an apple of gold. He was clad in gorgeous trousers and gorgeous Median robe. On his head was the peaked *kitaris* girt with the crown, beneath which the formally curled hair flowed down to mingle with the great beard. He had chains of gold upon him and golden bracelets, a golden zone engirdled him, from his ears hung rings of gold. Behind the throne stood an attendant with a fan against the flies and held his mouth lest his breath should touch the royal person. Before the throne stood the courtiers, their hands concealed, their eyelids stained with *kohl*, their lips never smiling, their painted faces never moving. Greece saved us from all that,

The King had many wives and a great harem of concubines—one for each day of the year. You remember the Book of Esther. Ahasuerus is the Greek Xerxes. There is in Herodotus a story of that court which, however unauthentic it may be in details, has a clear evidential value. On his return from Greece Xerxes rested at Sardis, the ancient capital of Lydia. There he fell in love with the wife of his brother Masistes. Unwilling to take her by force, he resorted to policy. He betrothed his son Darius to Artaynte, the daughter of Masistes, and took her with him to Susa (the Shushan of Esther), hoping to draw her mother to his great palace there, “where were white, green and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble.” In Susa, however, the King experienced a new sensation and fell in love with Artaynte—who returned his affection. Now Amestris the Queen had woven with her own hands a wonderful garment for her lord, who inconsiderately put it on to pay his next visit to Artaynte. Of course Artaynte asked for it, of course in the end she got it, and of course she made a point of wearing it. When Amestris heard of this, she blamed, says Herodotus, not the girl but her mother. With patient dissimulation she did nothing until the Feast of the Birthday of the King, when he cannot refuse a request. Then for her present she asked the wife of Masistes. The King, who understood her purpose, tried to save the victim; but too late. Amestris had in the meanwhile sent the King’s soldiers for the woman; and when she had her in her power *she cut away her breasts and threw them to the dogs, cut off her*



*nose and ears and lips and tongue, and sent her home.*

It may be thought that the Persian monarchy cannot fairly be judged by the conduct of a Xerxes. The reply to this would seem to be that it was Xerxes the Greeks had to fight. But let us choose another case, Artaxerxes II, whose life the gentle Plutarch selected to write because of the mildness and democratic quality which distinguished him from others of his line. Yet the *Life of Artaxerxes* would be startling in a chronicle of the Italian Renaissance. The story which I will quote from it was probably derived from the *Persian History* of Ktesias, who was a Greek physician at the court of Artaxerxes. This Ktesias, as Plutarch himself tells us, was a highly uncritical person, but after all, as Plutarch goes on to say, he was not likely to be wrong about things that were happening before his eyes. Here then is the story, a little abridged.

*She—that is, Parysatis the queen-mother—perceived that he—Artaxerxes the King—had a violent passion for Atossa, one of his daughters. . . . When Parysatis came to suspect this, she made more of the child than ever, and to Artaxerxes she praised her beauty and her royal and splendid ways. At last she persuaded him to marry the maid and make her his true wife, disregarding the opinions and laws (Nomoi) of the Greeks; she said that he himself had been appointed by the god (Ahuramazda) a law unto the Persians and judge of honour and dishonour. . . . Atossa her father so loved in wedlock that, when leprosy had overspread her body, he felt no whit of loathing thereat, but praying for her sake to Hera (Anaitis?) he did obeisance to that goddess only, touching the*

*ground with his hands ; while his satraps and friends sent at his command such gifts to the goddess that the whole space between the temple and the palace, which was sixteen stades (nearly two miles) was filled with gold and with silver and with purple and with horses.*

Artaxerxes afterwards took into his harem another of his daughters. The religion of Zarathustra sanctioned that. It also sanctioned marriage with a mother. According to Persian notions both Xerxes and Artaxerxes behaved with perfect correctness. The royal blood was too near the divine to mingle with baser currents. There is no particular reason for believing that Xerxes was an exceptionally vicious person, while Artaxerxes seemed comparatively virtuous. It was the system that was all wrong. What are you to expect of a prince, knowing none other law than his own will, and surrounded from his infancy by venomous intriguing women and eunuchs? Babylon alone used to send five hundred boys yearly to serve as eunuchs. . . . I think we may now leave the Persians.

*Hear again Phocylides : " A little well-ordered city on a rock is better than frenzied Nineveh."* The old poet means a city of the Greek type, and by " well-ordered " he means governed by a law which guarantees the liberties of all in restricting the privileges of each. This, the secret of true freedom, was what the Barbarian never understood. Sperthias and Boulis, two rich and noble Spartans, offered to yield themselves up to the just anger of Xerxes, whose envoys had been flung to their death in a deep water-tank. On the road to Susa they were entertained by the Persian grandee Hydarnes, who

said to them: *Men of Sparta, wherefore will ye not be friendly towards the King? Beholding me and my condition, ye see that the King knoweth how to honour good men. In like manner ye also, if ye should give yourselves to the King (for he deemeth that ye are good men), each of you twain would be ruler of Greek lands given you by the King. They answered: Hydarnes, thine advice as touching us is of one side only, whereof thou hast experience, while the other thou hast not tried. Thou understandest what it is to be a slave, but freedom thou hast not tasted, whether it be sweet or no. For if thou shouldst make trial of it, thou wouldest counsel us to fight for it with axes as well as spears!*

So when Alexander King of Macedon came to Athens with a proposal from Xerxes that in return for an alliance with them he would grant the Athenians new territories to dwell in free, and would rebuild the temples he had burned; and when the Spartan envoys had pleaded with them to do no such thing as the King proposed, the Athenians made reply. *We know as well as thou that the might of the Persian is many times greater than ours, so that thou needest not to charge us with forgetting that. Yet shall we fight for freedom as we may. To make terms with the Barbarian seek not thou to persuade us, nor shall we be persuaded. And now tell Mardonios that Athens says: "So long as the sun keeps the path where now he goeth, never shall we make compact with Xerxes; but shall go forth to do battle with him, putting our trust in the gods that fight for us and in the mighty dead, whose dwelling-places and holy things he hath contemned and burned with fire."* This was their answer to Alexander; but to the Spartans



they said. *The prayer of Sparta that we make not agreement with the Barbarian was altogether pardonable. Yet, knowing the temper of Athens, surely ye dishonour us by your fears, seeing that there is not so much gold in all the world, nor any land greatly exceeding in beauty and goodness, for which we would consent to join the Mede for the enslaving of Hellas. Nay even if we should wish it, there be many things preventing us: first and most, the images and shrines of the gods burned and cast upon an heap, whom we must needs avenge to the utmost rather than be consenting with the doer of those things; and, in the second place, there is our Greek blood and speech, the bond of common temples and sacrifices and like ways of life—if Athens betrayed these things, it would not be well. . . .*

οὐ καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι, "it would not be well." When I was writing about Greek simplicity I should have remembered this passage. But our present theme is the meaning of Eleutheria. "Our first duty," say the Athenians, "is to avenge our gods and heroes, whose temples have been desecrated." Such language must ring strangely in our ears until we have reflected a good deal about the character of ancient religion. To the Greeks of Xerxes' day religion meant, in a roughly comprehensive phrase, the consecration of the citizen to the service of the State. When the Athenians speak of the gods and heroes, whose temples have been burned, they are thinking of the gods and heroes of Athens, which had been sacked by the armies of Mardonios; and they are thinking chiefly of Athena and Erechtheus.

Now who was Athena? You may read in books that she was "the patron-goddess of Athens." But

she was more than that; she *was* Athens. You may read that she "represented the fortune of Athens"; but indeed she *was* the fortune of Athens. You may further read that she "embodied the Athenian ideal"; which is true enough, but how small a portion of the truth! It was not so much what Athens might become, as what Athens was, that moulded and impassioned the image of the goddess. It was the city of to-day and yesterday that filled the hearts of those Athenians with such a sense of loss and such a need to avenge their Lady of the Acropolis. For that which had been the focus of the old city-life, the dear familiar temple of their goddess, was a heap of stones and ashes mixed with the carrion of the old men who had remained to die there.

As for Erechtheus, he was the great Athenian "hero." The true nature of a "hero" is an immensely controversial matter; but what we are concerned with here is the practical question, what the ancients thought. They, rightly or wrongly, normally thought of their "heroes" as famous ancestors. It was as their chief ancestor that the Athenians regarded and worshipped Erechtheus. Cecrops was earlier, but for some reason not so worshipful; Theseus was more famous, but later, and even something of an alien, since he appears to come originally from Troezen. Thus it was chiefly about Erechtheus as "the father of his people," rather than about maiden Athena, that all that sentiment, so intense in ancient communities, of the common blood and its sacred obligations entwined itself. This old king of primeval Athens claimed his share of the piety due to the dead of

every household, an emotion of so powerful a quality among the unsophisticated peoples that some have sought in it the roots of all religion. It is an emotion hard to describe and harder still to appreciate. Erechtheus was the Son of Earth, that is, really, of Attic Earth; and on the painted vases you see him, a little naked child, being received by Athena from the hands of Earth, a female form half hidden in the ground, who is raising him into the light of day. The effect of all this was to remind the Athenians that they themselves were *autochthones*, born of the soil, and Attic Earth was their mother also. Not only her spiritual children, you understand, nor only fed of her bounty, but very bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh. *Ge Kourotrophos* they called her, "Earth the Nurturer of our Children." Unite all these feelings, rooted and made strong by time: love of the City (Athena), love of the native and mother Earth (Gê), love of the unforgotten and unforgetting dead (Erechtheus)—unite all these feelings and you will know why the defence of so great sanctities and the avenging of insult against them seemed to Athenians the first and greatest part of Liberty.

So Themistocles felt when after Salamis he said: *It is not we who have wrought this deed, but the gods and heroes, who hated that one man should become lord both of Europe and of Asia; unholy and sinful, who held things sacred and things profane in like account, burning temples and casting down the images of the gods; who also scourged the sea and cast fetters upon it.* And it is this feeling which gives so singular a beauty and charm to the story of Dikaios. "Dikaios the son of Theokydes, an Athenian then in



exile and held in reputation among the Persians, said that at this time, when Attica was being wasted by the footmen of Xerxes and was empty of its inhabitants, it befell that he was with Demaratos in the Thriasian Plain, when they espied a pillar of dust, such as thirty thousand men might raise, moving from Eleusis. And as they marvelled what men might be the cause of the dust, presently they heard the sound of voices, and it seemed to him that it was the ritual-chant to Iacchus. Demaratos was ignorant of the rites that are performed at Eleusis, and questioned him what sound was that. But he said, *Demaratos, of a certainty some great harm will befall the host of the King. For this is manifest—there being no man left in Attica—that these are immortal Voices proceeding from Eleusis to take vengeance for the Athenians and their allies. And if this wrathful thing descend on Peloponnese, the King himself and his land army will be in jeopardy ; but if it turn towards the ships at Salamis, the King will be in danger of losing his fleet. This is that festival which the Athenians hold yearly in honour of the Mother and the Maid, and every Athenian, or other Greek that desires it, receives initiation ; and the sound thou hearest is the chanting of the initiates.* Demaratos answered, *Hold thy peace, and tell no man else this tale. For if these thy words be reported to the King, thou wilt lose thine head, and I shall not be able to save thee, I nor any other man. But keep quiet and God will deal with this host.* Thus did he counsel him. And the dust and the cry became a cloud, and the cloud arose and moved towards Salamis to the encampment of the Greeks. So they knew that the navy of Xerxes was doomed ;”

Athena, the Mother-Maid Demeter-Persephone with the mystic child Iacchus, Boreas "the son-in-law of Erechtheus," whose breath dispersed the enemy ships under Pelion and Kaphareus—of such sort are "the gods who fight for us" and claim the love and service of Athens in return. It is well to remember attentively this religious element in ancient patriotism, so large an element that one may say with scarcely any exaggeration at all that for the ancients patriotism was a religion. Therefore is Eleutheria, the patriot's ideal, a religion too. Such instincts and beliefs are interwoven in one sacred indissoluble bond uniting the Gods and men, the very hills and rivers of Greece against the foreign master. Call this if you will a mystical and confused emotion; but do not deny its beauty or underestimate its tremendous force.

But here (lest in discussing a sentiment which may be thought confused we ourselves fall into confusion) let us emphasize a distinction, which has indeed been already indicated. Greek patriotism was as wide as Greece; but on the other hand its intensity was in inverse ratio to its extension. Greek patriotism was primarily a local thing, and it needed the pressure of a manifest national danger to lift it to a wider outlook. That was true in the main and of the average man, although every generation produced certain superior spirits, statesmen or philosophers, whose thought was not particularist. It was this home-savour which gave to ancient patriotism its special salt and pungency. When the Athenians in the speech I quoted say that their first duty is to avenge their gods, they are thinking more of Athens than of Greece. They are thinking

of all we mean by "home," save that home for them was bounded by the ring-wall of the city, not by the four walls of a house.

The wider patriotism of the nation the Greeks openly or in their hearts ranked in the second place. Look again at the speech of the Athenians. First came Athens and her gods and heroes—their *fathers'* gods; next *To Hellenikon*, that whereby they are not merely Athenians but Hellenes—community of race and speech, the common interest in the *national* gods and their festivals, such as Zeus of Olympia with the Olympian Games, the Delphian Apollo with the Pythian Games. Of course this Hellenic or Panhellenic interest was always there, and in a sense the future lay with it; but never in the times when Greece was at its greatest did it supplant the old intense local loyalties. The movement of Greek civilization is from the narrower to the larger conception of patriotism, but the latter ideal is grounded in the former. Greek love of country was fed from local fires, and even Greek cosmopolitanism left one a *citizen*, albeit a citizen of the world. So it was with Eleutheria, which enlarged itself in the same sense and with an equal pace.

This development can be studied best in Athens, which was "the Hellas of Hellas." One finds in Attic literature a passionate Hellenism combined with a passionate conviction that Hellenism finds its best representative in Athens. The old local patriotism survives, but is nourished more and more with new ambitions. New claims, new ideals are advanced. One claim appears very early, if we may believe Herodotus that the Athenians used it in debate with the men of Tegea before the Battle



of Plataea. The Athenians recalled how they had given shelter to the Children of Heracles when all the other Greek cities would not, for fear of Eurystheus; and how again they had rescued the slain of the Seven from the Theban king and buried them in his despite. On those two famous occasions the Athenians had shown the virtue which they held to be most characteristic of Hellenism and specially native to themselves, the virtue which they called "philanthropy" or the love of man. What Heine said of himself, the Athenians might have said: they were brave soldiers in the liberation-war of humanity.

There is a play of Euripides, called *The Suppliant Women*, which deals with the episode of the unburied dead at Thebes. The fragmentary Argument says: *The scene is Eleusis. Chorus of Argive women, mothers of the champions who have fallen at Thebes. The drama is a glorification of Athens.* The eloquent Adrastos, king of Argos, pleads the cause of the suppliant women who have come to Athens to beg the aid of its young king Theseus in procuring the burial of their dead. Theseus is at first disposed to reject their prayer, for reasons of State; he must consider the safety of his own people; when his mother Aithra breaks out indignantly. *Surely it will be said that with unvalorous hands, when thou mightest have won a crown of glory for thy city, thou didst decline the peril and match thyself, ignoble labour, with a savage swine; and when it was thy part to look to helm and spear, putting forth thy might therein, wast proven a coward. To think that son of mine—ah, do not so! Seest thou how Athens, whom mocking lips have named unwise, flashes back upon her scorners*

*a glance of answering scorn? Danger is her element. It is the unadventurous cities doing cautious things in the dark, whose vision is thereby also darkened. And the result is that Theseus and his men set out against the great power of Thebes, defeat it and recover the bodies, which with due observance of the appropriate rites they inter in Attic earth.*

*"To make the world safe for democracy" is something; but Athens never found it safe, perhaps did not believe it could be safe. Ready to take risks, facing danger with a lifting of the heart . . . their whole life a round of toils and dangers . . . born neither themselves to rest nor to let other people. In such phrases are the Athenians described by their enemies. A friend has said: I must publish an opinion which will be displeasing to most; yet (since I think it to be true) I will not withhold it. If the Athenians in fear of the coming peril had left their land, or not leaving it but staying behind had yielded themselves to Xerxes, none would have tried to meet the King at sea. And so all would have been lost. But as the matter fell out, it would be the simple truth to say that the Athenians were the saviours of Greece. The balance of success was certain to turn to the side they espoused, and by choosing the cause of Hellas and the preservation of her freedom it was the Athenians and no other that roused the whole Greek world—save those who played the traitor—and under God thrust back the King. And some generations later, Demosthenes, in what might be called the funeral oration of Eleutheria, sums up the claim of Athens in words whose undying splendour is all pride and glory transfiguring the pain of failure and defeat. Let no man, I beseech you, imagine that there is anything*

*of paradox or exaggeration in what I say, but sympathetically consider it. If the event had been clear to all men beforehand . . . even then Athens could only have done what she did, if her fame and her future and the opinion of ages to come meant anything to her. For the moment indeed it looks as if she had failed ; as man must always fail when God so wills it. But had She, who claimed to be the leader of Greece, yielded her claim to Philip and betrayed the common cause, her honour would not be clear. . . . Yes, men of Athens, ye did right—be very sure of that—when ye adventured yourselves for the safety and freedom of all ; yes, by your fathers who fought at Marathon and Plataea and Salamis and Artemision, and many more lying in their tombs of public honour they had deserved so well, being all alike deemed worthy of this equal tribute by the State, and not only (O Aeschines) the successful, the victorious. . . .*

Demosthenes was right in thinking that Eleutheria was most at home in Athens. Now Athens, as all men know, was a " democracy " ; that is, the general body of the citizens (excluding the slaves and " resident aliens ") personally made and interpreted their laws. Such a constitution was characterized by two elements which between them practically exhausted its meaning ; namely, *autonomy* or freedom to govern oneself by one's own laws, and *isonomy* or equality of all citizens before the law. Thus Eleutheria, defined as the Reign of Law, may be regarded as synonymous with Democracy. " The basis of the democratical constitution is Eleutheria," says Aristotle. This is common ground with all Greek writers, whether they write to praise or to condemn. Thus Plato humorously, but not quite



good-humouredly, complains that in Athens the very horses and donkeys knocked you out of their way, so exhilarated were they by the atmosphere of Eleutheria. But at the worst he only means that you may have too much of a good thing. Eleutheria translated as unlimited democracy you may object to; Eleutheria as an ideal or a watch-word never fails to win the homage of Greek men. Very early begins that sentimental republicanism which is the inspiration of Plutarch, and through Plutarch has had so vast an influence on the practical affairs of mankind. It appears in the famous drinking-catch beginning *I will bear the sword in the myrtle-branch like Harmodios and Aristogeiton*. It appears in Herodotus. Otanes the Persian (talking Greek political philosophy), after recounting all the evils of a tyrant's reign, is made to say: *But what I am about to tell are his greatest crimes: he breaks ancestral customs, and forces women, and puts men to death without trial. But the rule of the people in the first place has the fairest name in the world, "isonomy," and in the second place it does none of those things a despot doeth*. In his own person Herodotus writes. *It is clear not merely in one but in every instance how excellent a thing is "equality."* *When the Athenians were under their tyrants they fought no better than their neighbours, but after they had got rid of their masters they were easily superior. Now this proves that when they were held down they fought without spirit, because they were toiling for a master, but when they had been liberated every man was stimulated to his utmost efforts in his own behalf.* The same morning confidence in democracy shines in the reply of the constitutional king, Theseus,

to the herald in Euripides' play asking for the "tyrant" of Athens. *You have made a false step in the beginning of your speech, O stranger, in seeking a tyrant here. Athens is not ruled by one man, but is free. The people govern by turns in yearly succession, not favouring the rich but giving him equal measure with the poor.*

The *naïveté* of this provokes a smile, but it should provoke some reflection too. Why does the rhetoric of liberty move us so little? Partly, I think, because the meaning of the word has changed, and partly because of this new "liberty" we have a superabundance. No longer does Liberty mean in the first place the Reign of Law, but something like its opposite. Let us recover the Greek attitude, and we recapture, or at least understand, the Greek emotion concerning Eleutheria. Jason says to Medea in Euripides' play, *Thou dwellest in a Greek instead of a Barbarian land, and hast come to know Justice and the use of Law without favour to the strong.* The most "romantic" hero in Greek legend recommending the conventions!

This, however, is admirably and characteristically Greek. The typical heroes of ancient story are alike in their championship of law and order. I suppose the two most popular and representative were Heracles and Theseus. Each goes up and down Greece and Barbary destroying *hybristai*, local robber-kings, strong savages, devouring monsters, ill customs and every manner of "lawlessness" and "injustice." In their place each introduces Greek manners and government, Law and Justice. It was this which so attracted Greek sympathy to them and so excited the Greek imagination. For

the Greeks were surrounded by dangers like those which Heracles or Theseus encountered. If they had not to contend with supernatural hydras and triple-bodied giants and half-human animals, they had endless pioneering work to do which made such imaginings real enough to them; and men who had fought with the wild Thracian tribes could vividly sympathize with Heracles in his battle with the Thracian "king," Diomedes, who fed his fire-breathing horses with the flesh of strangers. Nor was this preference of the Greeks for heroes of such a type merely instinctive; it was reasoned and conscious. The "mission" of Heracles, for example, is largely the theme of Euripides' play which we usually call *Hercules Furens*. A contemporary of Euripides, the sophist Hippias of Elis, was the author of a too famous apologue, *The Choice of Heracles*, representing the youthful hero making the correct choice between Laborious Virtue and Luxurious Vice. Another Euripidean play, *The Suppliant Women*, as we have seen, reveals Theseus in the character of a conventional, almost painfully constitutional, sovereign talking the language of Lord John Russell. As for us, our sympathies are ready to flow out to the picturesque defeated monsters—the free Centaurs galloping on Pelion—the cannibal Minotaur lurking in his Labyrinth. But then our bridals are not liable to be disturbed by raids of wild horsemen from the mountains, nor are our children carried off to be dealt with at the pleasure of a foreign monarch. People who meet with such experiences get surprisingly tired of them. There is a figure known to mythologists as a Culture Hero. He it is who is believed to have introduced



law and order and useful arts into the rude community in which he arose. Such heroes were specially regarded, and the reverence felt for them measures the need of them. Thus in ancient Greece we read of Prometheus and Palamêdes, the Finns had their Wainomoinen, the Indians of North America their Hiawatha. Think again of historical figures like Charlemagne and Alfred, like Solon and Numa Pompilius, even Alexander the Great. A peculiar romance clings about their names. Why? Only because to people fighting what must often have seemed a losing battle against chaos and night the institution and defence of law and order seemed the most romantic thing a man could do. And so it was.

Such a view was natural for them. Whether it shall seem natural to us depends on the fortunes of our civilization. On that subject we may leave the prophets to rave, and content ourselves with the observation that there are parts of Europe to-day in which many a man must feel himself in the position of Roland fighting the Saracens or Aëtius against the Huns. As for ourselves, however confident we may feel, we shall be foolish to be over-confident; for we are fighting a battle that has no end. The Barbarian we shall have always with us, on our frontiers or in our own breasts. There is also the danger that the prize of victory may, like Angelica, escape the strivers' hands. Already perhaps the vision which inspires us is changing. I am not concerned to attack the character of that change but to interpret the Greek conception of civilization, merely as a contribution to the problem. To the Greeks, then, civilization is

the slow result of a certain immemorial way of living. You cannot get it up from books, or acquire it by imitation; you must absorb it and let it form your spirit, you must live in it and live through it; and it will be hard for you to do this, unless you have been born into it and received it as a birth-right, as a mould in which you are cast as your fathers were. "Oh, but we must be more progressive than that." Well, we are not; on the contrary the Greeks were very much the most progressive people that ever existed—intellectually progressive, I mean of course; for are we not talking about civilization?

The Greek conception, therefore, seems to work. I think it works, and worked, because the tradition, so cherished as it is, is not regarded as stationary. It is no more stationary to the Greeks than a tree, and a tree whose growth they stimulated in every way. It seems a fairly common error, into which Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton sometimes fall, for modern champions of tradition to over-emphasize its stability. There has always been the type of "vinous, loudly singing, unsanitary men," which Mr. Wells has called the ideal of these two writers; he is the foundational type of European civilization. But it almost looks as if Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton were entirely satisfied with him. They want him to stay on his small holding, and eat quantities of ham and cheese, and drink quarts of ale, and hate rich men and politicians, and be perfectly parochial and illiterate. But Hellenism means, simply an effort to work on this sound and solid stuff; it is not content to leave him as he is; it strives to develope him, but to develope him within

the tradition; to transform him from an Aristophanic demesman into an Athenian citizen. But Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton are Greek in this, that they have constantly the sense of fighting an endless and doubtful battle against strong enemies that would destroy whatever is most necessary to the soul of civilized men. *Well I know in my heart and soul that sacred Ilium must fall, and Priam, and the folk of Priam with the good ashen spear . . . yet before I die will I do a deed for after ages to hear of!*



## V

### SOPHROSYNE

IT needs imagination for the modern man to live into the atmosphere of ancient Greece. It ought not now to be so hard for us who have seen the lives and sanctities of free peoples crushed and stained. It should be easier for us to reoccupy the spiritual ground of Hellas, to feel a new thrill in her seemingly too simple formulas, a new value in her seemingly cold ideals. It is opportune to write about her now, and justifiable to write with a quickened hope. For all that, mental habits are the last we lose, and the habit of regarding our civilization as secure has had time to work itself deep into our minds. It has coloured our outlook, directed our tastes, altered our souls.

That last expression may appear overstrained. Yet reflect if it really be so. These many ages we have felt so safe. If fear came on us, it was not fear for the fabric itself of civilization. We grew delicately weary of our inevitably claspings and penetrating culture. We called it our "old" civilization, with some implication of senility; and we were restive under its restraints and conventions. We were affected in different ways, but we were all affected, we were all tired of our security. To

escape it some of us fled to the open road and a picturesque gipsyism, some hunted big game in Africa. One or two of us actually did these things, a greater number did them in imagination, reading about them in books. Others, not caring to fatigue their bodies, or too fastidious or sincere or morbid to find relief in personal or vicarious adventures—for this reason or that—pursued “spiritual adventures” or flamed out into rebellion against what they felt insulted their souls. It seems clear enough that our bohemianism of the city and the field is not two things but one, and I am not put from this opinion by the consciousness of temperamental gulfs between typical moderns such as (not to come too near ourselves) Whitman and Poe in America. The symptoms are different, but the malady is the same.

I am not concerned to defend the word “malady,” if it be thought objectionable. It may be a quite excellent and healthy reaction we have been experiencing. But a reaction means a disturbance of poise, leaving us to some extent, as we say, unbalanced. It may have been so in an opposite sense with the Greeks. I may not deny (for I am not sure about it) that they went to the other extreme. It is possible and even likely. But if they were rather mad about the virtues of sanity, and rather excessive in their passion for moderation, this intensity can only be medicinal to us, who need the tonic badly. It may help us to reach that just equilibrium in which the soul is not asleep, but, in fact, most thrillingly sensitive. Being what it is, the human soul seems bound to oscillate for ever about its equipoise. It will always have its

actions and reactions. Our violent reaction against the sense of an absolute security is entirely natural because of that strange passion, commingled of longing and fear, that draws us to the heart of loneliness and night. But it has exactly reversed our point of view. We have wished for the presence of conditions which the Greeks, having them, wished away. We have wished the forest to grow closer to our doors. We have admired explorers and pioneers. We have admired them because we are different. Well, the Greeks were explorers and pioneers—and not merely in things of the spirit—and they wished the forest away. Naturally, you see; just as naturally as we long for it to be there.

There is a line in Juvenal which means that when the gods intend to destroy a man they grant him his desire. If we suddenly found ourselves in the heart of savagery, most of us would wish to retract our prayers. Robinson Crusoe tired of his delightful island. Men who live on the verge of civilization are apt to cherish ideals which create strong shudders in the modern artistic soul. On the African or Canadian frontiers, or cruising in the south seas, a man may dream of a future "home" of the kind which has moved so many of our writers to laughter or pity. Whatever our own aspiration might be under the burden of similar circumstances, we should at least experience a far profounder sense of the value of those very civilities and conventions, of which we had professed our weariness. To uphold the flag of the human spirit against the forces that would crush and humiliate it—that would seem the heroic, the romantic thing. Exactly that was the mission of Greece, as she knew well, feeling all the



glory and labour of it. And so far as to fight bravely for a fair ideal with the material odds against you is romantic, in that degree Greece was romantic. Her victory (of which we reap the fruits) has wrought her this injury, that her ideal has lost the attraction that clings to beautiful threatened things. It has become the "classical" ideal, consecrated and—for most of us—dead.

But it is not dead, and it will never perish, for it is the watchword of a conflict that may die down but cannot expire; the conflict between the Hellene and the Barbarian, the disciplined and the undisciplined temper, the constructive and the destructive soul. Let that conflict become desperate once more, and we shall understand. But a little exercise of imagination would let us understand now. As it is, we hardly do. We note with chilled amazement the passionate emphasis with which the Greeks repeat over and over to themselves their *Nothing too much!* as if it were charged with all wisdom and human comfort. We understand what the words say; we do not understand what they mean.

The explanation is certain. The Greek watchword is uninspiring to us, because we do not need it. We are not afraid of stimulus and excitement, because we have our passions better under control, because we have more thoroughly subdued the Barbarian within us, than the Greeks. It is at least more agreeable to our feelings to put it that way than to speak of "this ghastly thin-faced time of ours." The Greeks, on the other hand, were wildly afraid of temptation, not much for puritanic reasons, although for something finer than prudential ones. It may seem a little banal to repeat it, but—

they had the artistic temperament. They had the exceptional impressionability, and they felt the very practical necessity (at least as important for the artist as the puritan) of a serenity at the core of the storm. *The wind that fills my sails, propels; but I am helmsman* is the image in Meredith. I once collected a quantity of material for a study of the Greek temperament. I have been looking over it again, and I find illustration after illustration of an impressionability rivalling that of the most extreme Romantics. It is difficult to appraise this evidence. Quite clearly it is full of exaggeration and prejudice. If you were to believe the orators about one another, and about contemporary politicians, you would think that fourth-century Athens was run exclusively by criminal lunatics. Nor are the historians writing in that age much better, infected as they are by the very evil example of the rhetoricians. But the cumulative effect is overwhelming, and is produced as much, if not more, by little half-conscious indications, mere gestures and casual phrases, as by the records of hysterical emotionality and scarlet sins. Don't you remember how people in Homer when they meet usually burst into tears and, if something did not happen, might (the poet says) go on weeping till sunset? It is not so often for grief they weep—unless for that remembered sorrow which is a kind of joy—as for delight in the renewal of friendship, or merely to relieve their feelings. The phrase used by Homer to describe the end of such lamentations is one he also applies to people who have just thoroughly enjoyed a meal. There is a sensuous element in it. Of course, one murmurs “the southern” or

“the Latin temperament”; but if we understood the Latin temperament better, we should be able to read more meaning into that warning *Nothing too much!*

A friend said to Sophocles, “*How do you feel about love, Sophocles? Are you still fit for an amorous encounter?*” “*Don’t mention it, man; I have just given it the slip—and very glad too—feeling as if I had escaped from bondage to a ferocious madman.*” To be sure Sophocles was a poet and had the poetical temperament, and it would argue a strange ignorance of human nature to make any inferences concerning his character from the Olympian serenity of his art. But listen to this anecdote about an ordinary young man. *Leontios the son of Aglaion was coming up from the Piraeus in the shadow of the North Wall, on the outside, when he caught sight of some corpses lying at the feet of the public executioner. He wanted to get a look at them, but at the same time he was disgusted with himself and tried to put himself off the thing. For a time he fought it out and veiled his eyes. His desire, however, getting the mastery of him, he literally pulled apart his eyelids and, running up to the dead bodies, said, “There you are, confound you; glut yourselves on the lovely sight!”*

Both anecdotes are in Plato, and may serve as a warning when we are tempted to think him too hard on the emotional elements of the soul. He knew the danger, because he felt it himself, because he understood the Greek temperament—better, for instance, than Aristotle did. Undoubtedly there is an ascetic strain in Plato, as there is in every moralist who has done the world any good. But Greek asceticism is an attuning of the instrument, not



a mortification of the flesh. It is just the training or discipline that is as necessary for eminence in art or in athletics as for eminence in virtue. The Greek words—askêsis, aretê—level these distinctions.

This high tension is the natural reaction of a spirit, finely and richly endowed as the Greek was, to the pressure of strong alien forces. If the tension relaxed or broke, the result was what you might expect; there was a rocket-like flash to an extreme. Others as well as I may have wondered at the sort of language we find in Greek writers concerning "tyrants." The horror expressed is not merely conventional or naïve as in a child's history book, it is real and deeply felt. The danger of tyranny was of course very actual in most of the Greek states, even in Athens. But it is not so much the danger of suffering as of exercising a tyranny that is in the minds of the best Greek writers. The tyrant is a damned soul. Waiting for him in the dark are "certain fiery-looking" devils and the Erinyes, Avengers of Blood. The tyrant is the completion and final embodiment of human depravity. . . . Well, perhaps he is. But we should never think of giving the tyrant so very special a pre-eminence over every other type of criminal. Yet the Greek feeling seems quite natural when we reflect that the very definition of a tyrant is one that is placed above the law, and is therefore under no external obligation to self-restraint, lacking which the average Greek very rapidly and flamboyantly went to the devil.

There was, for example, Alexander prince of Phrae, whom Shakespeare read about in his Plutarch. Alexander had a habit of burying people

alive, or wrapping them in the skins of bears or boars ; he used to hunt them with dogs. He consecrated the spear with which he had murdered his uncle, crowning it with garlands and offering sacrifices to it under the name of Tychon, an obscene god. This same Alexander was present once at a performance of Euripides' *Trojan Women*, and was so overcome by his feelings that he hurried from the theatre, leaving a message for the leading actor, which explained that he did not disapprove of the acting, but was ashamed to let people see him, who had never shown the least pity for his victims, crying over Hecuba and Andromache. *What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her?*

One might perhaps say of Alexander what Ruskin (speaking, as he assures us, after due deliberation) says of Adam Smith, that he was "in an entirely damned state of soul." It would be easy to multiply examples like that of this Pheraean, but it would be still easier to disgust the reader with them. I will take, then, a milder case (more instructive in its way than much pathology) which has for us this twofold value, that it is full of human and pathetic interest, and at the same time reflects, all the more if there are legendary elements in it, the popular imagination of the tyrant's mood. It is the tragedy of Periandros, lord of Corinth. Hear Sosikles the Corinthian in Herodotus.

*When Kypselos had reigned thirty years and ended his life happily, he was succeeded by his son, Periandros. Now Periandros was milder than his father at first, but afterwards by means of messengers he joined himself to Thrasyboulos the tyrant of Miletus,*

and became yet more bloody by far than Kypselos. For he sent a herald to Thrasyboulos and inquired how he might most safely put affairs in order and best govern Corinth. Thrasyboulos brought the messenger of Periandros forth from the city, and entering into a field of corn he went through the corn, putting one question after another to the herald on the matter of his coming from Corinth. And ever as he spied an ear that overtopped the rest, he would strike it off, and so marring it cast it down, until in this way he destroyed the fairest and tallest portion of the crop. And having traversed the field he sends away the herald without giving him a word of counsel. When the herald returned to Corinth, Periandros wished to learn the counsel. But the other said that Thrasyboulos had answered nothing, and that he marvelled at him, what manner of man he had sent him to, one beside himself and a destroyer of his own possessions ; relating what he saw done by Thrasyboulos. But Periandros, understanding the action and perceiving that Thrasyboulos advised him to slay the most eminent of the citizens, then showed every manner of villainy towards the Corinthians. Whatever Kypselos had left unaccomplished by his slaughterings and banishments, Periandros fulfilled. And in one day he stripped naked all the women of Corinth for his wife Melissa's sake. For when he had sent messengers to the river Acheron in Thesprotia, to the Oracle of the Dead there, to inquire concerning a treasure deposited by a stranger, the ghost of Melissa appeared and said that she would not signify nor declare in what place the treasure was laid ; for she was cold and naked, since she had no profit of the garments that had been buried with her, for that they had not been burned ; and for proof



*that her words were true she had a secret message for his ear. . . . When these things were reported to Periandros (for the secret forced him to believe, since he had had to do with Melissa when she was dead) immediately after he caused it to be proclaimed that all the wives of the Corinthians should come forth to the temple of Hera. And when they came, wearing their richest garments as for a holy feast, he set his bodyguard in their way, and stripped them all, bond and free alike, and gathering all into a trench he burned the pile with prayer to Melissa. And when he had done this, and had sent to her the second time, the ghost of Melissa told him where she had deposited the stranger's treasure.*

Periandros had murdered Melissa. After her death another calamity, says Herodotus, befell him as I shall tell. He had two sons by Melissa, one seventeen years of age and the other eighteen. Their mother's father Prokles, tyrant of Epidaurus, sent for them to his castle and kindly entreated them, as was natural, for they were his daughter's children. But when he was bidding them farewell, he said, "Know ye, my children, who slew your mother?" This saying the elder regarded not, but the younger, whose name was Lykophron, when he heard it was so moved—the poor young man—that when he came to Corinth, he spake no word to his father, accounting him his mother's murderer, neither would he converse with him nor answer any question. And at last Periandros in great anger drove him from the house. And after he had expelled him, he questioned the elder son, what discourse their uncle had held with them. And he told his father that Prokles had received them kindly, but made no mention of that speech of Prokles, which

he uttered at their departing, for he had not marked it. But Periandros declared that it was in no way possible but that he had given them some counsel, and closely questioned the lad, till he remembered and told this also. And Periandros, understanding the matter and resolved not to yield weakly in any thing, sent a messenger to those with whom the son whom he had driven forth was living, and forbade them to take him in. And whenever the wanderer came to another house, he would be driven from this also, Periandros threatening those who received him and commanding them to thrust him forth. And he went wandering from house to house of his friends, who, for all their fear, used to receive him, seeing that he was the son of Periandros. But at last Periandros caused proclamation to be made, that whosoever should receive him in his house or speak to him, the same must pay such and such a sacred penalty to Apollo. Therefore because of this proclamation no man was willing to speak to the lad or to give him shelter. Moreover neither would he himself try to obtain that which was forbidden him, but endured all, haunting the public porticos. On the fourth day Periandros saw him all unwashen and emaciated for lack of food, and was moved to pity, and remitting somewhat of his anger he approached and said, " My son, whether is better, to fare as now thou farest, or to take over my lordship and the good things that are mine, reconciled to thy father? But thou, my son and prince of wealthy Corinth, hast chosen a vagrant life, opposing and showing anger against him whom thou oughtest least to hate. If there has been a mishap in that matter, the same hath befallen me also, and I have the larger share therein, as mine was the deed.

*But apprehending how far better it is to be envied than pitied, and at the same time what manner of thing it is to be wroth with them that begat thee and are stronger than thou, come back home."* With these words Periandros sought to constrain his son, but he made no other answer but only this, that his father had incurred the sacred penalty to the god by entering into speech with him. And Periandros, perceiving that there was no dealing with nor overcoming of the enmity of his son, sends him away out of his sight on board a ship to Corcyra, for he was master of Corcyra also. But after he had dispatched him, Periandros made an expedition against Prokles his father-in-law, blaming him chiefly for what had happened, and took Epidaurus, and took Prokles himself alive.

But in course of time Periandros came to be old, and knew himself no longer capable of watching over and administering affairs. Wherefore he sent to Corcyra and recalled Lykophron to the tyranny; for he saw nothing in his elder son, but looked upon him as somewhat dull of wit. But Lykophron would not even answer the messenger. But Periandros, who was bound up in the young man, made a second attempt, sending his own daughter, Lykophron's sister, thinking he would most readily listen to her. And when she had come she said, "Dear Lykophron, is it your desire that our lordship should fall to others and thy father's substance be scattered abroad, rather than come away and have it thyself? Come home; cease punishing thyself. A proud heart is poor profit. Do not cure one evil with another. Many prefer mercy to justice; and many ere now in seeking what was their mother's have lost what their father had. A tyranny is a slippery thing, and many there be



*that long for it; and he is now an old man and past his prime. Give not away what is thine own to others."* These were her words, which her father had taught to her as the most persuasive. But Lykophron answered that he would on no account come to Corinth so long as he knew his father was alive. When she had brought back this answer, Periandros sends a third messenger, a herald, to propose that he should go himself to Corcyra, and bidding Lykophron come to Corinth to succeed him in the tyranny. The young man agreed to these terms, and Periandros was setting out for Corcyra and the prince to Corinth, when the Corcyraeans, becoming aware of all this, in order that Periandros might not come to their land, put the lad to death. Therefore Periandros took vengeance on the Corcyraeans.

The revenge of the old man was to send three hundred boys of the chief Corcyraean families to the great Lydian king, Alyattes, to be made eunuchs. . . . He was cheated of his revenge by a humane stratagem of the Samians. The lonely old man, with that touch of original nobleness all gone now, black frustrate rage in his heart, love turned to an inhuman hate of all the world, wearing this Nessus shirt of remorse and despair! *Such is tyranny*, says Sosikles at the end of his speech, *Such is tyranny, O Lacedaemonians, and such its consequences.*

Periandros, you see, has already become a type. There is a curious fitness in the application to these old "tyrants" of the worn quotation from *The Vanity of Human Wishes*—they do very specially point a moral and adorn a tale. The moral they point is the danger of losing *Sophrosyne*. There is a wonderful description in Plato's *Republic* of the

tyrant's genesis, a description which may startle us by the intensity of feeling which one touches in it. It is a story of the gradual loss of Sophrosyne, ending in perfect degeneration and the loss of all the other virtues as well. This Sophrosyne (one of the cardinal Greek virtues and the most characteristic of all) confronts us at the outset of any study of the Hellenic temperament. To understand the one is to understand the other. Complete understanding is of course impossible, but we may get nearer and nearer to the secret.

Sophrosyne is the "saving" virtue. That means little—or nothing—until it is steeped in the colours of the Greek temperament, and viewed in the Greek attitude to life. Well then, the Greek attitude to life—how shall we describe that? I am going to describe it in a phrase which is at least accurate enough to help on our discussion greatly: it looks upon life as an *Agon*, and by an *Agon* is meant the whole range of activities from the most to the least heroic, from the most to the least spiritual, contest or competition. The reader will forgive an appearance of pedantry in this, since the word needs careful translation. Now my suggestion is that this *agonistic* view of life, if I may so call it, pervades and characterizes all Classical antiquity. To understand clearly the nature of an *Agon* we must keep firmly in mind its origin. It would be misleading surely to call its origin religious—as if men needed to be religious to fight!—but it is undeniable that its roots are embedded in that primitive life which is so largely mastered by religion and magic. In consequence an ancient *Agon* was nearly always a religious ceremony. That seems curious

enough to a modern mind, yet nothing is more certain. The great national Games like the Olympic, the rhapsodic and musical contests, the Attic Drama (which was specifically an Agon)—all had this religious or supernatural *aura* investing them. And when one looks into Greek religion itself, one finds everywhere as its characteristic expression a choric dance, which normally takes the form of an actual or mimic contest between two sides or “semi-choruses.”

The motive then of an Agon differed from that of an ordinary modern contest. It was normally a *ritual* contest, and its motive a *religious* motive. It was not held for its own sake, like a football match, but for a definite object. This object the Greeks called *Nikê*, which we translate—inadequately enough, as is plain from the facts we have been considering—as “victory.” It was felt to be not so much a personal distinction as a blessing upon the whole community. It possessed a magical virtue. There was even a sense in which in an ancient Agon everybody won. Nor does it seem extravagant to say that Greek society, like a primitive society, only in a far richer, more complex, more significant and spiritual way, was organized for the production of *Nikê*.

That is a large matter. There is, to be sure, no need of accumulated detail to prove that the Agon was the most characteristic institution of ancient life; it only requires to be pointed out; everywhere we find these competitions. What may chiefly interest us for the moment is that the Agon was simply the outward expression of the characteristic Greek outlook upon life and upon the whole human



scene. For the Greek looked upon life itself as a struggle, an Agon, an opportunity for the production of Nikê. Mr. Wells gives to one of his essays the title of "The Human Adventure." Life as the Human Adventure very well expresses the Greek feeling about it. Only let us not forget that the Nikê which is the object and justification of every Agon is—I have already remarked it—something utterly, qualitatively different from mere success. It is the triumph of the Cause. "Success"—"the successful business man"—not that kind of success.

The most successful man in Greece, every one remembers, was rewarded with a little garland of wild olive. *God help us, Mardonios*, said a noble Persian when he heard this, *what men are these thou hast brought us to fight against!—men that contend not for money but for merit.* The individual Greek could want money badly enough, as may be gathered from the amusing, but satirical, *Characters* of Theophrastus. Yet in the soul of Hellas, for all its strong sense of reality and despite some inclination to avarice, one finds at last something you might almost call quixotic. Is there not some element of quixotry in every high adventure? And what adventure could be higher than to fight for "the beautiful things," *Ta Kala*, against the outnumbering Barbarian?

Sophrosyne is the virtue that "saves" in this battle. Understand it so, and you must share some part of the ardour this word inspired. It means the steady control and direction of the total energy of a man. It means discipline. It means concentration. It is the angel riding the whirlwind, the charioteer driving the wild horses. There is no

word for it in English, and we must coldly translate "moderation," "temperance," "self-restraint." "Moderation" as a name for this strong-pulsed, triumphant thing! Why even the late-born, unromantic Aristotle, even while he is describing Sophrosyne as a "mean" between excessive and deficient emotionality, turns aside to remark, as a thing almost too obvious to need pointing out, that "there is a sense in which Sophrosyne is an *extreme*." This is She whom Dante beheld on the Mountain of Purgatory such that "never were seen in furnace glasses or metals so glowing and red":

*giammai non si videro in fornace  
vetri o metalli sì lucenti e rossi.*

## VI

### GODS AND TITANS

It was an ancient hypothesis that the Gods are only deified men. A certain Euêmeros suggested this. His favourite illustration was Zeus; that greatest of the Gods, he said, was a prehistoric king in Crete, as the Cretan legends about him proved. This theory has received a fresh life from the investigations of modern scholars. Historically, it seems to be largely true; psychologically, it explains nothing at all. *All men have need of the Gods*, says Homer; the religious instinct, that is the important thing, or rather (since the other is important too) that is the fundamental thing. It is also the prior thing, the spring of the religious act. If I want to know why primitive men make a god of one of their number, it seems no answer to assure me that they do so. Yet the historical inquiry has great interest too, and throws a dim and rather lurid light on the development of religion and religious thought. And I could not leave untouched an aspect of the old Greek life so vital as its belief about the gods without illustrating how here also the conflict of Greek and Barbarian worked itself out.

It is almost the other day that we rediscovered



the old Aegean religion—the immemorially ancient religion of the non-Greek peoples, the Barbarians, who lived about the Aegean Sea. It is now clear that the Hittites, the Phrygians, the ancient peoples of Anatolia generally, worshipped a kind of triad or trinity of Father, Son and Consort. Sometimes, as in the Hittite sculptures, the Father and the Son seem the important members of the group; sometimes, as in the Phrygian religion, the emphasis is chiefly on the Mother and Consort, and the Son. But the third member can always be discovered too, standing pretty obviously in the background. In prehistoric Crete (which, of course, became Greek in historical times) we again recognize the divine Three in the persons of those native divinities whom the Greeks learned to call Kronos, Rhea and Zeus. That is the skeleton of the old religion; the living flesh in which it was clothed was begotten in tribal custom. Primitive peoples fashion their gods after their own image. Their chief god they think of as a greater and more worshipful “king,” swayed by the passions, observing the etiquette, and wearing the regalia of their earthly rulers. Now the primitive king held his place by force or craft or the terror of his rages (his *menos*)—and by no other tenure. He lived in constant dread of the rival who, younger and stronger, would one day rise against him and seize his throne. The rival might be a stranger, but more frequently he was the king’s own son, who, for one thing, would be thought likely to inherit the magical virtue of his sire. Accordingly, when the Young King was born, the Old King would seek his life. But there he would be apt to meet the opposition of the Queen,

who would seek to convey the child to a safe retreat. Then, grown at last to manhood, suddenly the Prince would return to challenge the Old King to mortal combat. The Gods behave exactly like that.

The chief depositary in ancient Greece of popular beliefs about the Gods is the curious poem attributed to Hesiod, called the *Theogony*. Along with certain parts of Homer, it formed what might be called the handbook of orthodoxy, and it tells us with an incomparable authoritativeness what the sacred tradition was. Eldest of all, says the *Theogony*, was Gaia or Mother Earth, a goddess. Now she *bare first starry Ouranos, equal to herself, that he might cover her on every side . . . and afterward she lay with him, and bare the deep coil of Okeanos, and Koios, and Krios, and Hyperion, and Iapetos, and Thea, and Rhea, and Themis, and Mnemosyne, and Phoibe with the gold upon her head, and lovely Tethys. And, after these, youngest was born Kronos the Crooked-Thinker, most dangerous of her sons, who loathed his lusty begetter.* There is a fuller account in another place. Next, of Gaia and Ouranos were born three sons, huge and violent, ill to name, Kottos and Briareos and Gyes, the haughty ones. From their shoulders swang an hundred arms invincible, and on their shoulders, upon their rude bodies, grew heads a fifty upon each; irresistible strength crowned the giant forms. Of all the children of Gaia and Ouranos most to be feared were these, and they were hated of their Sire from the first; yea, soon as one was born, he would not let them into the light, but would hide them all away in a hiding-place of Earth, and Ouranos gloried in the bad work. And, being straitened, huge Gaia groaned inwardly; and

*she thought of a cruel device. Hastily she created the grey flint, and of it fashioned a mighty Sickie, and expounded her thought to her Sons, speaking burning words from an anguished heart. "Sons of me and of an unrighteous Father, if ye will hearken to me, on your Father ye may take vengeance for his sinful outrage, for it was He began the devising of shameful deeds!"*

*So spake she, but fear seized them all, I ween, neither did one of them utter a word. But mighty Kronos the Cunning took heart of grace, and made answer again to his good Mother. "Mother, I will undertake and will perform this thing, since of our Father ('Father!') I reckon not; for it was He began the devising of shameful deeds!" So spake he, and mighty Gaia rejoiced greatly in her heart, and hid him in an ambush, and put in his hands the sharp-fanged Sickie, and taught him all the plot.*

*Great Ouranos came with falling night and cast him broadly over Gaia, desiring her, and outstretched him at large upon her. But that other, his Son, reached out with his left hand from the place of his hiding . . . and with his right grasping the monstrous fanged Sickie, he swiftly reaped the privy parts of his Father and cast them to fall behind him.*

In calling this story Barbarian, I feel as if I ought to apologize to the Barbarians. Nevertheless it is clearly more in their way than in the way of the Greeks. It excellently illustrates the kind of stuff from which Greek religion refined itself. You will see that it is the old savage stuff of the battle between the Kings. On this occasion it is the Young King who prevails and pushes the Old King from his throne—not to die (for he was a God), but to



live a shadowy, elemental life. But neither was Kronos able to escape his destiny. For Rhea, subdued unto Kronos, bare shining children, even Hestia, and Demeter, and gold-shod Hera, and strong Hades, that pitiless heart, dwelling under ground, and the roaring Earth-Shaker, and Zeus the Many-Counselled, the Father of Gods and men, by whose thunder the broad earth is shaken. They also—great Kronos was used to swallow them down, as each came from the womb to his holy Mother's knees, with intent that none other of the proud race of Ouranos should hold the lordship among the Everliving. For he knew from Gaia and starry Ouranos that he was fated to be overcome of his own child. . . . Therefore no blind man's watch he kept, but looked for his children and swallowed them; but Rhea grieved and would not be comforted. But when she was at point to bring forth Zeus, then she prayed her own dear parents, Gaia and starry Ouranos, to devise a plan whereby she might bear her Son in secret, and retribution be paid by Kronos the Crafty Thinker for his father's sake and his children that he gorged. And they truly gave ear to their daughter and obeyed her, and told her all things that were fated to befall concerning Kronos the King and his strong-hearted Son. And they conveyed her to Luktos in the fat land of Crete, when she was about to bring forth the youngest of her sons, great Zeus. Him gigantic Gaia received from her in broad Crete to nurture and to nurse. Thither came Gaia bearing him through the swift black night, to Luktos first; and she took him in her arms and hid him in a lonely cave, withdrawn beneath the goodly land, there where the wild-wood is thick upon the hills of Aigaion. But she wrapped a great Stone in swaddling-

clouts, and gave it to the Son of Ouranos so mightily ruling, the Old King of the Gods. And Kronos seized it then with his hands, and put it down in his belly without ruth, nor knew in his own mind that for a Stone his Son was left to him unvanquished and unharmed, that was soon to overcome him by main strength of his hands, and drive him from the sovranity, and be King himself among the Everliving.

For swiftly thereafter mightiness was increased to the Young King and his shining limbs waxed greater, and, as the seasons rounded to their close, great Kronos the Cunning was beguiled by the subtile suggestions of Gaia, and cast up again his offspring; and first he spewed forth the Stone, that he had swallowed last. Zeus planted it where meet the roads of the world in goodly Pytho under the rock-wall of Parnassus, to be a sign and to be a marvel to men in the days to come.

The Stone was there all right, for the French excavators have found it, looking highly indigestible. But it is unfair to treat Hesiod in this spirit. In fact, to read in him such passages as I have quoted is to give oneself quite a different emotion. There is the most curious conflict between one's moral and one's æsthetic reactions to them. You have a matter which it is poor to call savage, which is more like some atavistic resurrection of the beast in man; and you find it told in a style which is like some obsolescent litany full of half-understood words and immemorial refrains. The most primitive-minded is also the most literary poet in Greek, if by "literary" one means influenced by a tradition in style. He is full of the epic *clichés*, and he repeats them in a helpless, joyless way, as if he had no choice in the matter. If you wish to be unkind, you may

describe his style as the epic jargon. But you will be unjust if you do not admit a certain grandeur arising (it would almost seem) out of its very formalism. Even in its decay the epic style is a magnificent thing. The singing-robcs of Homer have faded and stiffened, but they are still dimly gorgeous, and it is with gold that they are stiff. The poet of the *Theogony*—I call him Hesiod without prejudice—wears them almost like a priest. But if you have to tell a story like those I have quoted, what other manner is possible than just such a conventional, half-ritualistic style, which acts like a spell to move the religious emotions and suspend the critical judgment? I am not quite finished with Hesiod, and I want the reader to have a little more patience with him and with me.

Before he was cast out of his throne, Ouranos, having conceived a hatred of his Sons, Briareos and Kottos and Gyes, *strongly bound them, being jealous of their overbearing valour, their beauty and stature, and fixed their habitation under the wide-wayed earth, where they were seated at the world's end and utmost marge, in great grief and indignation of mind. Natheless the Son of Kronos, and the rest of the immortal Gods that deep-haired Rhea bare in wedlock with Kronos, brought them up to the light again by the counsels of Gaia, who told them all the tale, how they would gain the victory and bright glory with the aid of those.* In another place we read that Briareos and Kottos and Gyes *were grateful for that good service, and gave Zeus the thunder and the burning bolt and the lightning-flash, that aforetime vast Gaia concealed; in them he puts his trust as he rules over mortals and immortals.*



He required them almost at once in his battle with the Titans. The word "Titans" seems to mean nothing more or less than "Kings." They were the Old Kings at war with the Young Kings (who, because they lived on Mount Olympus in Thessaly, came to be called the "Olympians") with Zeus at their head. Naturally the Old Kings took the side of Kronos, but after a ten years' war they were beaten in a terrific battle, and Zeus reigned supreme. And then how do we find him behaving? Like this. *And Zeus King of the Gods took to wife first Metis, that was wisest of Gods and men. And when indeed she was about to bring forth the blue-eyed Goddess Athena, he beguiled her with cunning words, and put her down into his belly, by the counsels of Gaia and starry Ouranos, who counselled him so, lest some other of the ever-living Gods should hold the sovranity in the stead of Zeus, for of her it was fated that most wise children should be born, first the bright-eyed Maid Tritogeneia, of equal might with her Sire and of a wise understanding, and after her I ween she was to bear a high-hearted Son, that would be King of Gods and men. So he clutched her and put her down in his belly, in fear that she would bear a stronger thing than the Thunderbolt.*

Now, of course, the Greeks once believed this sort of thing; otherwise you would not have Hesiod solemnly repeating it. But they very early repudiated it; and it is just the earliness and the thoroughness of their repudiation wherein they show themselves Greek. For the surrounding Barbarians kept on believing myths hardly less damnable, and kept acting on their faith; whereas as early as Homer you find the Greek protest. In

Homer it is silent ; he simply leaves Hesiod's rubbish out. But the Ionian philosophers were not silent ; indeed they included in their condemnation Homer himself. Heraclitus said that Homer deserved to be scourged out of the assemblies of men, and Archilochus likewise. Xenophanês said, *Homer and Hesiod attribute to the Gods all things that are scandals and reproach among men—to thieve, to be adulterers, and to deceive one another.* Pindar (a very moral poet) is indignant at the suggestion that an immortal god would eat boiled baby. Naturally, however, the poets and the philosophers approached the myths in a different spirit, which led to what in Plato's time was already "a standing quarrel." The philosophers objected to them altogether ; the poets made them so beautiful in the telling that they passed beyond the sphere of the moralist. Even the *Theogony* in parts achieves nobility ; even in the *Theogony* the Hellenizing process is at work on the Barbarian matter.

We shall be better instructed, however, if we observe the process in a later poet and a much greater artist. It so happens that the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus, like the *Theogony*, deals with the relations between the Old King and the New. The drama which we know as the *Prometheus Bound* is only a part of what ancient scholars called a trilogy, which is a series of three plays developing a single theme ; and we cannot even be certain whether it is the first part or the second. Of the other members of the trilogy we possess little more than the titles, which are *Prometheus Unbound* and *Prometheus the Fire-Carrier*. Most students are now strongly disposed to believe that the *Fire-Carrier*

received its name from the circumstance that the play had for its theme, or part of its theme, the foundation of the Prometheia or Festival of Prometheus at Athens, the culmination of which was a torch-race engaged in by youthful fire-carriers. Every year the Athenian ephêbi, running with lit torches in relays of competitors, contended which should be the first to kindle anew the fire upon the common altar of Prometheus and Hephaistos in the Academy. If this conjecture regarding the theme of the *Fire-Carrier* is just, then we may be sure that this play came last in the series, because it celebrates the triumph of the hero. Accordingly it is usual to arrange the trilogy in the order: *Prometheus Bound*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *Prometheus the Fire-Carrier*.

The *Prometheus Bound* deals with the punishment of Prometheus by Zeus. It is commonly said that the hero of the play is punished because he had stolen fire, which Zeus had hidden away, and bestowed it upon mortals, who are represented as hitherto uncivilized. There is a certain amount of truth in this view, for in the opening scene of the play, when Prometheus is nailed to his rock, the fiend Kratos repeats that the reason for this torture is the theft of fire. But the proper theme of the *Prometheus Bound* is not so much the binding of the Titan as the keeping him in bonds; and the reason for the prolongation of his torture is quite different from the reason for beginning it. The new reason is the refusal of Prometheus to reveal a secret, known to him but not to Zeus. All that Zeus knows is that one day he is fated to be superseded by his own son. What he does not, and what



Prometheus does know, is who must be the mother of that son. On the withholding and the final revelation of this secret revolves the whole plot, not only of the *Prometheus Bound*, but also of the lost plays of the trilogy. To get the truth Zeus patiently tortures his immortal victim for three myriads of years, himself tortured by the old dynastic terror. It is the recurring situation of the *Theogony* renewing itself once more.

Such crude material lay before Aeschylus. But his genius and his time alike required from him a different treatment from that which does not satisfy us in the archaic chronicle of Hesiod. The genius of the Athenian poet is of course essentially dramatic, and he lived in an age which had woken to the need for what I will simply call a better religion. Therefore he chose the subject of Prometheus, and therefore he treated it dramatically. Now for the poet and his audience what is most dramatic is, or ought to be, what is felt by them as most human; and what is most human is simply what is most alive and real to them; for drama aims at the illusion of reality. So Aeschylus could not handle his matter with the hieratic simplicity of the *Theogony*. The issues could not be so simple for the dramatist, because they are never so simple in actual life. If Aeschylus was to make Prometheus his hero, he would have to make him "sympathetic." And so, in *Prometheus Bound*, he does; Prometheus engages all our sympathy, while Zeus appears a tyrant in the modern, and not merely the ancient, sense of the word. But that is not the conclusion of the matter. We know that in the last play of the trilogy the tormentor and the tor-

mented were reconciled. To the uncompromising Shelley this was intolerable; and so he wrote his "Prometheus Unbound." And nearly every one who in modern times has written on the subject, whatever explanation or apology he may have put forward in behalf of Aeschylus, has wished in his heart that the Greek had felt like the Englishman.

That he did not, is just the curious and disconcerting thing we should like explained.

The tradition, of course, counts for much. Aeschylus did not invent his story. He found it already in existence, and he found it ending in a certain way. We cannot tell if it ended precisely in the way that Aeschylus represented. But we can be perfectly sure that it did not end in an unqualified victory for Prometheus. The tradition appears to be dead against him. Aeschylus therefore was so far bound by that. Then the problem presented itself to him with this further complication, that as a matter of knowledge Zeus was reigning *now*. So the justification of Zeus against the rebel Titan becomes a justification of the moral governance of the universe. Yet although Aeschylus felt the restraint of the myth and the restraint of the moral issue, it is to be believed that he submitted to them with full, and even passionate, acceptance. Like the great artist, like the great dramatic poet he is, he begins by stating the case for Prometheus as strongly as he can—more strongly, it would seem, than the existing legends quite allowed—and even in the end the Titan is not shorn of his due honour. But as against the Olympians, Aeschylus argues (with the Greek poets in general), the Titans were in the wrong. The sin of the Titans was lawlessness.

Prometheus, in bringing to mortals the gift of fire, broke the law which forbade them its use. The question whether the dealings of God with man were "just" or no, was not to be decided by your feelings (as Prometheus judged), but by cool and measured reflection as to what was best in the end for mankind, or rather for the universe, of which they formed after all so small a part.

Such doctrine falls chillingly on the modern spirit. But that is largely because we realize so ill what it means. The *Prometheus*-trilogy was a dramatization of the conflict of Pity and Justice embodied in two superhuman wills. Before you condemn the solution of Aeschylus, perhaps you are bound to answer the question if this is not the conflict which the modern world is trying with blood and tears to solve. In the end (so the old poet fabled) Zeus the rigid Justicer learned mercy, while his passionate enemy came to recognize the sovereignty of Law. A compromise, if you like; but if you are sorry for it, it only means that you are sorry for human life. I daresay Aeschylus was sorry too, but then he was not going to be sentimental. Life is after all governed by a compromise between Justice and Pity. And if it comes to a mere question of emotional values, does not one love Prometheus all the more because at the last he had, like any man, to give up a little of his desire?

Even so we shall not have done complete justice to the Greek position, until we have renewed in our minds the Greek emotion about law, order, measure, limitation—the things we are engaged in criticizing and, most of us, in disparaging. We must for our



purpose accept the Hellenic paradox. We must see with the Greek that it was not the wilderness, but the ploughed field and the ordered vineyard that was truly romantic. And in the moral reign it was Temperance, Self-Discipline, *Sophrosyne*; in the sphere of art the strict outline, the subjugation of excess, that filled the Greek with the pleasurable excitement we find in the exotic, the crude, the violent, the bizarre. The explanation is engagingly simple. To the ancient world law and order were the exception—the wild, romantic, hardly attainable exception; while us they interest about as much as a couple of boiled potatoes. We are for the Open Road and somewhere east of Suez. But the attraction then and now is exactly the same. It is the attraction of the unfamiliar.

We could understand the Hellenic paradox better if we had to live in an unsettled country. We should then receive the thrill which words like *Nomos* and *Thesmos* and *Kosmos*, the watchwords of civilization, awakened in the Greek bosom. We should understand the longing for a clue in the maze of the lawless, a saving rule to guide one through the thickets of desperate and degrading confusion. But as it is we are so hedged about by the barbed-wire entanglements of Government regulations and social conventions that our desires are chiefly concentrated on breaking through—breaking through, let us admit, at but a little point and for but a little time, for we are really rather fond of our prison-house and care not to be too long out of it. Yes, I think with a little effort we can understand. We can believe that the sense of home is strongest in the wanderer. He wanders to find

his home, and when he has found it, he cannot make it "home-like" and conventional enough.

So to the ancients Greek civilization had the flavour of a high and rare adventure. It was a crusade, the conquest of the Barbarian—the Barbarian without and within. Viewed in this light, the conflict between Zeus and Prometheus assumes an aspect novel enough to us. Zeus represents the Law—unjust in this instance if you will, unjust as perhaps Zeus himself came in the end partly to admit—but still the Law. Prometheus represents Anarchy. In this he shows himself truly a Titan, for the Titans embodied the lawless forces of nature and an undisciplined emotionality. Our fatigued spirits love to gamble a little with these excitements. But the Greeks had just escaped from them, and were horribly afraid of them. There is nothing their art loved to depict like the victory of the disciplined will—fairly typified in Zeus, perfectly in Athena—over unchained passion. Hence those endless pictures of Olympians warring against Titans, against Giants—of Greeks against Amazonas—of Heracles, of Theseus against the monsters. They are records of a spiritual victory won at infinite cost.

The true theme of the *Prometheus*-trilogy is the Reign of Law. Law in the realm of affairs, *Sophrosyne* in morals, form in art. There is nothing tame or negative about the doctrine. The Greek spirit was not tame or negative; it would be difficult to say how much it was not that! Indeed the inspiration of their creed was just the desire of the Greeks to extract the full value of their emotions. None knew better the danger lest one

*should lose distinction in his joys  
As doth a battle when they charge on heaps,  
The enemy flying.*

And, from the point of view of art—always so important for them—the rule of “measure” becomes the art of concentration. So Law stands revealed as Beauty. As Keats says, the final condemnation of the Titans was that, compared with the Olympians, they failed in Beauty :

*For first in Beauty shall be first in Might.*

The evolution of Greek religion is thus largely an artistic process. It would be obstinate to deny that the process may have been carried, at last, too far. Greek art begins as almost a form of religion ; Greek religion ends as almost a form of art. Yet it would certainly be still more obstinate to deny that more was gained than lost. There was gained, for instance, the Greek mythology. And what simplicity and sincerity that were lost were not more than made up for by that Greek religion—no longer of the State but of the individual—which we find in Plato and (as we have begun to see) in so much of the New Testament ?

How much, and with what immense justification, the Greek religious spirit was a spirit of beauty transforming Barbarism, could hardly be more aptly illustrated than by a story in Herodotus. It is the tale of Atys the son of Croesus. How beautiful it is, every reader will confess. But how instructive it is, hardly any but the special student will recognize. For he finds in it the unmistakable features of an ancient myth. *Atys*, the brilliant, early-dying prince



whom Herodotus, repeating the legend as he heard it, calls the son of the historical Croesus, is no other than *Attis*, brother and son and spouse—the ambiguity is in the myth—of the Mountain Mother of Phrygia. *Atys*, slain in hunting the boar, is *Attis*, who was a hunter, and scarcely distinguishable from *Adonis*. The matter is explained at length by Sir James Frazer in his *Attis Adonis and Osiris*. The myth arose out of the worship of the Asiatic goddess variously named by the Greeks *Kybelê*, *Kybêbê*, *Rhea*, and other titles, though in reality a nameless deity, a holy Mother and Bride wedded at the right season of the year to her son, *Attis*, that its fruits might be renewed through the magic of that ritual. There was a temple of “*Kybelê*” near *Sardis*—still stand a column or two—where the *Paktôlos* rushes from its mountain gorge. That helps to explain why a prince of *Sardis* has entered into her myth. It is even possible that actual princes of *Sardis* did anciently personate once a year the consort of the great goddess of the region. This at least accords with analogy, and best explains the origin of the story in Herodotus. For the rest it is a Phrygian tale. *Olympus*, where the fabled boar is hunted, was in *Mysia*, which was in Phrygia. *Adrastos*, “He from whom there is no Escape,” is certainly connected with the goddess *Adrasteia*, much worshipped in the Phrygian Troad. Above all it was in Phrygia that the Mountain Mother was chiefly worshipped. In spring the Phrygians fashioned an image of the young *Attis*, and mourned over it with ritual dirges, recalling his doom. Thus gradually we may dig down to the roots of the myth.

What we find there is a thing of horror. Nana,

daughter of the River Sangarios, saw an almond-tree, which had sprung from the blood of a son of Kybelê, whom the gods in fear of his strength had mutilated. (Here is the Hesiodic *motif* again.) She conceived and bare a child, which she exposed. At first the wild goats nurtured him ; then shepherds of the mountain. At last Attis was grown so beautiful that Agdistis (who is but a form of Kybelê) loved him, and when he would not answer her love, drove him mad, so that he fled to the hills and there under a pine-tree unmanned himself. From his blood sprang violets to hang about the tree.

But for the unexpected sweetness of wild violet and mountain pine at the close, the story is curiously unlovely. But what really gives one a shudder is the reflection that the story mirrors a fact. The priests of Kybelê . . . what I would say is that they behaved like Attis.

You would guess none of these things from Herodotus. What has happened to the myth that it is transmuted to the exquisite and piteous tale he has related ? We can only say that it has suffered the Greek magic. The Hellenic spirit, dreaming on the old dark fantasy, robs it a little of its wild, outrageous beauty (which was to reappear later in the *Attis* of Catullus), but keeps much of its natural magic, and by introducing the figure of the father adds overwhelmingly to the dramatic value of the story. Most of all it steeps the whole in a wonderful rightness of emotion. The gift which has achieved this is, as I have hinted, a dramatic gift ; the magic is the same as that which pervades the Attic Tragedy. So much is this the case that the Tale of Atys in Herodotus reads like

a Greek tragic drama in prose. The explanation is that ancient Tragedy arose out of just such a ritual as that from which sprang the Atys story. That story, so far as I know, was never made the subject of an actual drama. It seems a pity. What a subject it would have been for Euripides!

It seems to me a legitimate procedure, in an essay of this kind, to indicate the affinity between the tale in Herodotus and the normal structure and method of Attic Tragedy by treating the narrative portions of the tale as so many stage-directions, and the dialogue as we treat the dialogue in a play, assigning every speech to its proper speaker. Let me only add that all the dialogue, and practically all of the stage-directions, are literally translated.

### THE DEATH OF ATYS

*[The scene is Sardis in Lydia. It is a populous settlement of reed-thatched houses clustering about a wonderful, sheer, enormous rock crowned by the great walls of the Citadel. Over against it, to the south, rises the neighbouring range of Tmôlos, whence issues the famous little stream of the Paktôlos, which, emerging from a gorge, rolls its gold-grained sand actually through the market-place of Sardis into the Hermos. Some miles away, by the margin of a lake, appear the vast grave-mounds of the Lydian kings. Within the Citadel is the ancestral Palace of CROESUS. Any one entering the palace would observe its unwonted splendour—silver and gold and electrum everywhere. He would also be struck by the circumstance that the walls of the great Hall are bare of the swords and spears and quivers, which it was customary to hang there. At*



*present the weapons are piled in the women's chambers.*

*CROESUS is seen clad in a great purple-red mantle, and carrying a long golden sceptre tipped with a little eagle in gold. He is surrounded by his bodyguard of spearmen, who wear greaves and breastplates of bronze, and helmets crested with the tails of horses.*

*A STRANGER in the peaked cap, embroidered dress, and tall boots of a Phrygian noble enters with drawn sword, and with looks of haste and horror. Seeing CROESUS, he utters no word, but, running forward, sits down by the central hearth of the house, strikes his sword into the floor, and covers his face. By this proceeding he confesses at once that he is a homicide, and that he desires absolution from his sin. In silence also the KING approaches and gazes on the man. Then he goes through the elaborate and displeasing ritual of purification from bloodshed, calling aloud on the God of Suppliants to sanctify the rite. At last he is free to question the STRANGER.]*

*CROESUS. Man sitting at my hearth, who art thou and whence comest thou out of Phrygia? What man or what woman hast thou slain?*

*STRANGER. O King, I am the son of Gordias the son of Midas, and my name is Adrastus. Behold here one that by unhappiness hath slain his own brother, and my father hath driven me out, and all hath been taken from me.*

*CROESUS. Now art thou among friends, for there is friendship between our houses. Here wilt thou lack nothing, so long as thou abidest in my house. Strive to forget thy mischance; that will be best for thee.*

[*The man ADRASTOS enters the Palace with CROESUS. Meanwhile arrive certain messengers. They are mountaineers, dressed in skins and carrying staves hardened at the point by fire. They come from Mount Olympus in Mysia.*]

MYSIANS. Lord, a very mighty boar hath revealed himself in our land, the which layeth waste our tillage, neither can we by any means slay him. Now therefore we beseech thee, send thy son with us, and chosen young men, and dogs, that we may destroy him out of the land.

CROESUS. As for my son, make ye no mention of him hereafter ; I will not send him with you ; for he hath lately married a wife, and is occupied with this. Yet will I send chosen men of the Lydians, and all the hunt, and straitly charge them very zealously to aid you in destroying the beast out of the land.

[*Enters now the young man, ATYS, the son of CROESUS. He is dressed much in the Greek fashion, but with such ornaments of gold and embroidery of flowers upon him as beseeem a prince of the House of the Mermnadae. He has heard of the prayer of the MYSIANS, and now pleads with his father that he may be permitted to go with them.*]

ATYS. Father, aforetime when I would be going to battle and the chase and winning honour therein, that was brave and beautiful. But now hast thou shut me out alike from war and from the hunt, albeit thou hast not espied in me any cowardice or weakness of spirit. And now with what countenance must I show myself either entering or departing from the assembly of the people ? What shall be deemed of me by the folk of this city and

my newly married wife? What manner of husband will she suppose is hers? Therefore either suffer me to go upon this hunting, or else persuade me that thy course is better.

CROESUS. O son, I do not this because I have espied cowardice or any unlovely thing in thee at all. But the vision of a dream came to me in sleep, and said that thy life was not for long; by an iron edge thou wouldest perish. Therefore I was urgent for thy marrying, because I had regard unto this vision, and therefore I will not send thee upon this emprise, being careful if by any means I may steal thee from death, while I am living. For thou art mine only son, not counting the other, the dumb.

ATYS. I blame thee not, father, that having beheld such a vision thou keepest ward over me. But what thou perceivest not neither understandest the significance thereof in thy dream, meet is it that I tell thee. Thou sayest that the dream told that I should be slain by an iron edge. But a boar—what hands hath it, or what manner of iron edge which thou fearest? Had the dream made mention of a tusk or the like, needs must thou do as now thou doest; but it said an edge. Seeing therefore that it is not against men that I go to fight, let me go.

CROESUS. My son, herein thou dost convince my judgement by thine interpretation of the dream. Wherefore being thus persuaded by thee I do now change my thought and suffer thee to go to the hunting.

[*The KING now sends for ADRASTOS and they speak as follows.*]



CROESUS. Adrastos, when a foul mischance smote thee (I reproach thee not therewith), I cleansed thee of thy sin, and received thee in my house, and have furnished thee with abundance of all things. Now therefore (for thou owest me a kindness) keep ward over my son that goeth forth to the chase, lest evil thieves appear to your hurt. Moreover for thyself also it is right that thou go where thou shalt win glory by thy mighty deeds ; for so did thy fathers before thee ; and moreover thou art a mighty man.

ADRASTOS. For another reason, O King, I would not have gone on such a venture. For neither is it seemly, nor do I wish, that one so afflicted mingle among his fortunate peers ; yea, for manifold reasons I would have refrained. But now, since thou art urgent thereto and I am bound to perform thy pleasure—for I owe thee return of kindness—I am ready to do this thing : thy son, whom thou straitly chargest me to guard, expect thou to return home without hurt, so far as I am able to guard him.

*In this manner, continues Herodotus, did he then make answer to Croesus. And after that they set forth with service of chosen young men and of dogs. And when they had come to the mountain Olympus, they began to quest for the beast ; and having found him they stood round about him, and cast their javelins at him. Then the stranger, the man that had been purged of the stains of blood, even he that was named Adrastos, cast his spear at the boar, and missed him, and smote the son of Croesus instead. And he so smitten by the edge of the spear fulfilled the saying of the nightly vision. But one ran to tell Croesus*

*that which had befallen ; and when he was come to Sardis he declared to him the manner of the fight and the slaying of his son. And Croesus being mightily troubled by the death of the young man complained the more vehemently for that he had been killed by that very one whom he had purified of a manslaying. And in the passion of his grief he cried aloud with a great and terrible voice on Zeus of Purification, calling him to bear witness what recompense he had received at the hands of the stranger ; and he named him moreover God of the Hearth and God of Companionship, naming him by the former name because receiving the stranger into his house he had unwittingly given meat and drink to the slayer of his child, and by the latter name because having sent him with his son to guard him he now found him his greatest enemy.*

*And now the Lydians came bearing the dead body, and behind them followed the slayer. And he standing before the dead yielded himself up to Croesus, stretching forth his hands, bidding him slay him over the body, making mention of his former calamity, and how now he had besides brought destruction upon the man that had purified him, neither was it meet that he should live. Croesus hearing has pity on Adrastos, albeit in so great sorrow of his own, and says to him : Guest, I have all I may claim of thee, since thou dost adjudge thyself to death. Not thee I blame for this ill, save as thou wert the unwilling doer thereof ; nay but some god methinks is the cause, who even aforetime showed me that which should come to pass.*

*Then did Croesus honourably bury his son. But Adrastos the son of Gordias the son of Midas, even*

*the man that had killed his own brother, and had killed the son of him that washed away his offence, after the people had left the tomb and there was silence, deeming in his own heart that of all men that he knew himself was most calamitous, slew himself upon the grave.*



## VII

### CLASSICAL AND ROMANTIC

#### I

WHEN Alexander the Great invaded India, that pupil of Aristotle interested himself in questions to the Gymnosophists, or native philosophers. To the eldest of these Gymnosophists (says Plutarch) he addressed the following conundrum: *Which is older—the night or the day?* The ancient man promptly replied, *The day—by the length of one day.* When Alexander demanded what he meant by such an answer, the sage remarked that he always gave that sort of answer to people who asked that kind of question. I think this must be one of the best retorts ever made, but I have an uncomfortable feeling that it applies rather exactly to the subject of this essay. The difference between the Classical and the Romantic! It is indeed an apparently insoluble problem. Nor can I imagine anything more disheartening or more inimical to human happiness than blowing upon the embers of a half-extinct controversy. That, it will be gathered, is not my intention. I merely intend to let my discourse eddy about a familiar topic, in the hope that some accretions may be washed away, and at

least the true outline of the subject revealed. We have been trying to build up an impression of Hellenism as an *Agon*, or Struggle with Barbarism. The material being so vast, it has been necessary to be somewhat meagrely selective and illustrative, or else to fritter away the point in details. But the most general survey would be incomplete, unless we attain some view of how Greek literature, so much the most important witness left us of the old Greek spirit, reflects the situation.

The suggestion I have to offer may be helpful or not. But it has two qualities which should make it worth entertaining, if only for the moment: it is easily understood, and it is easily tested. My suggestion is that Classical art is an expression of Hellenism and Romantic art of Barbarism, so far as Barbarism is capable of expression.

Here I feel the want of something beyond my own instinct in discerning the Classical from the Romantic. To distinguish them is never perfectly easy: in the greatest art it is thought to be impossible. In the end one has to rely upon oneself, for nobody is pleased with a second-hand or impersonal criticism. If you happen to care for literature, you will not be content with discussions of it which do not help you to realize the thing you love. As to the words "Classical" and "Romantic," they have become current coin with us, and yet they are coin without fixed value. Thus when Mr. Shaw attacks the "Romance" which Stevenson adored, it is clear that they cannot mean the same thing. What, then, do they mean? It is very hard to find out. You may read that Romance is the spirit of the Middle Ages, or the spirit of the German forest; but you find yourself left to your

own interpretation of Mediævalism or Fairyland. As for the "Renaissance of Wonder"—that of course is just beautiful nonsense.

The clearest words on the matter are Matthew Arnold's. There is a kind of justice in this, for Arnold's criticism was perpetually engaged in the issue between the Romantic and the Classical. Himself (as his best poetry shows) a Romantic at heart, he stood in the middle of the Romantic triumph pleading for the austerities of art. That alone proves his genius for criticism. It also gives him a special right to be heard. As I shall seem to be attacking Arnold, it will be better for me to say now that with his general attitude and temper I am in intimate sympathy. I am disposed to think that his statement of the Classical case is the best that has yet been made. In some points I think it is even too favourable; in others not favourable enough. That is all.

*The forest solitude, he says in his book "On the Study of Celtic Literature," the bubbling spring, the wild flowers, are everywhere in romance. They have a mysterious life and grace there; they are nature's own children, and utter her secret in a way which makes them something quite different from the woods, waters and plants of Greek and Latin poetry. Now of this delicate magic, Celtic romance is so pre-eminent a mistress that it seems impossible to believe the power did not come into romance from the Celts. Magic is just the word for it—the magic of nature; not merely the beauty of nature—that the Greeks and Latins had; not merely an honest smack of the soil, a faithful realism—that the Germans had; but the intimate life of nature, her weird power and her fairy charm. And*



on the way to this attribution and this denial he distinguishes four modes of handling nature. *There is the conventional way of handling nature, there is the faithful way of handling nature, there is the Greek way of handling nature, there is the magical way of handling nature. In all these three last the eye is on the object, but with a difference; in the faithful way of handling nature, the eye is on the object, and that is all you can say; in the Greek the eye is on the object, but lightness and brightness are added; in the magical the eye is on the object, but charm and magic are added.*

One need not deny the value of these distinctions. But, admitting them, must we confess that there is no "natural magic" in the Greeks? Of your grace listen a little to Homer in prose. *As the numerous nations of winged birds—wild geese or cranes or long-throated swans—in the Asian Mead about the runnels of Kayster stream make little flights and flights in the glory of their pinions, alighting with cries which make the marish ring. Is there no natural magic in that? Or in this? As when torrents running down a mountain into a cañon hurl together their violent waters from large springs in a deep watercourse, and the shepherd on far-off mountains hears their thunder? Or consider this. As when the glare of a blazing fire is seen by sailors out at sea burning at some lonely shieling high up among the hills. Again we read: They clomb Parnassus, steep forest-clad hill, and soon came to the windy gullies. The sun was then smiting the fields with his earliest rays out of the quiet, deep-running river of the world; and the beaters came to the glade. A last example: As when Pandion's daughter, the greenwood nightingale, sings beautifully at the start of spring, perched in a place of leafy trees, with running*

*variable note she sheds abroad her far-heard song, mourning the end of Itylus. Is there no magic in all this?*

Still, it is uncritical to attempt to carry the critical judgment by storm. You will of course admit the glory and intoxication of these Homeric similes, but you may still feel that Arnold's distinction is not finally swept away by them. Something in the lines he quotes—Keats's

*Magic casements opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn;*

Shakespeare's

*On such a night  
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand  
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waved her love  
To come again to Carthage—*

something there may be felt to express a more personal or intimate relation to nature than anything I have yet quoted from Homer. Shall I then quote more to show that even this touch Homer has got? *He burned him with his inlaid arms and heaped a grave-mound over him; and round it the hill-nymphs planted elms.* Is not that final touch magical enough? And surely there is intimacy here. *As when the great deep glooms with silent swell, dimly forboding the hurrying path of the piping winds.* And the personal note, is it not audible here? *And now in a rocky place of lonely hills, at Sipylos, where couch the nymphs (men say) whose feet are swift on Acheloïos' banks—there changed to stone she broods upon the wrongs that gods have wrought her.* And here are two passages of love,

of love in a Romantic setting, if we mean anything by that at all. *Under them the divine earth sent up sudden grass and dewy lotus and crocus and hyacinth thick and soft, upbearing them from the ground. Thereon they lay, folded in a beautiful golden cloud that dropped a glimmer of dew.* That is the love of Zeus and Hera. What follows tells of the desire of Poseidon for Tyro. *She conceived a love of divine Enîpeus, fairest by far of rivers flowing over the earth, and haunted the fair waters of Enîpeus. Therefore the Earth-Embracer and Earth-Shaker made himself like Enîpeus and lay with her at the outflowings of the eddying river; then a darkling wave rose mountain-like about them and hung over them, hiding the god and the mortal woman.* Does not this possess the magical touch?

It is in Homer everywhere. In all his dealings with nature he adds to his words not merely lightness and brightness, but something magical as well. If he does not do it, no poet does. Why, Homer's very "fixed epithets" are surcharged with magic. Think of his epithets for the dawn alone—*κροκόπεπλος*, *saffron-robed*; *χρυσόθρονος*, *golden-throned*; *ρόδοδάκτυλος*, *rose-fingered*—the Romantic poets have always envied them. It is impossible to deny the magical, Romantic quality to Homer, unless you make an admission with which I shall deal in a moment. And Homer is not alone among Greek poets in the possession of "natural magic"; one might almost say all the great Greek poets have it. Almost the loveliest words that Sappho has left us are little broken fragments of description as imaginatively touched as anything in Keats or Coleridge. Such are the fragments translated by Rossetti, and the fragment of the sleepless woman crying to the stars



for her lover. There are the few lines of Alcman, comparing him to "the sea-blue bird of spring," which are enough to put him not too far from Sappho and Coleridge themselves. And Aeschylus in *Prometheus Bound*, and Euripides in the *Bacchae*—have they got no feeling for Romantic nature? Then there is Pindar. Why, Pindar has almost more of it than any one. Remember the strange splendour like a windy sunset of the great *Fourth Pythian* ode, telling of Jason in marvellous lands. Repeat a line or two: *Coming to the margin of the whitening sea, alone in the dark he called aloud upon the roaring Master of the Trident; and he appeared to him anigh at his foot.* Or take this of the new-born Iamos, whom his mother Euadne "exposed": *But he was hidden in the rush and the boundless brake, his delicate body splashed with the yellow and deep purple glory of pansies.* Is there "natural magic" there, or is there not?

Two things, perhaps, misled Arnold, both of them just and true. The first was the feeling of a radical difference somewhere between Classical and Romantic art. The second was the insignificance in Greek literature of magic pure and simple, the magic of fairies and witches. Greek literature deals sparingly in this sort of magic, while it is part of the stock-in-trade of Romance. It looks as if Arnold were unconsciously arguing that the Romantic passion for magic professed ought somehow to make itself felt in descriptions of nature, while the Greek dislike of magic would disable the Classical poet from seeing her with the enchanted eyes of the Celt. Now there is an element of truth in this, though not, I think, a very important element. It may be suggested that in

all true poetry, whether Classical or Romantic, Greek or Celtic, mere vulgar magic is transmuted into that infinitely finer and lovelier thing which Arnold, in claiming it for Keats and Shakespeare, calls "natural magic"; which may be more abundant in Romantic poetry, but is present just the same in Homer and Pindar.

One is led to this conjecture about the train of Arnold's thought when one reads the quotations he has selected to illustrate the special appeal of Celtic Romance. They mainly come from the *Mabinogion* in Lady Charlotte Guest's translation. Although it seems a pity that Arnold must draw his shafts from one quiver, and that not his own, still the *Mabinogion* is beautiful enough, and the translation so readable, that it is not clear where he could have found, for people who have no Welsh or Irish, better illustrations. He quotes the words of Math to Gwydion when Gwydion wished a wife for his pupil. "Well," says Math, "*we will seek, I and thou, by charms and illusions, to form a wife for him out of flowers.*" So they took the blossoms of the oak, and the blossoms of the broom, and the blossoms of the meadow-sweet, and produced from them a maiden, the fairest and most graceful that man ever saw. And they baptized her, and gave her the name of Flower Aspect. It is a famous passage since Arnold quoted it; and if we are to have magic, let it always be as beautiful as this; for I am far from denying the beauty of many a magical rite. But magic you see it is, magic palpable and practical—not the magic of

*And beauty born of murmuring sound  
Shall pass into her face;*

which is the true poetical magic and something yet more attractive.

Arnold immediately proceeds from this to a passage in which the Celtic writer describes the dropping of blood as *faster than the fall of the dewdrop from the blade of reed-grass upon the earth, when the dew of June is at the heaviest*. Well, Homer says, *Gladness fell upon his spirit like dew upon the ears of ripening corn when there is a rustling in the fields*. The Celtic passage is the more exquisite, at any rate than Homer in my prose. But between these two passages who would say that there is an essential difference? It is not maintained that Homer writes in this manner as often as a Romantic poet; and that is a difference worth remarking. But I do assert that he can write so when he likes, and as well as any.

Now what if this finer poetic magic is really a subtilization of the crude appeal of practical magic? Something like this Arnold almost suggests. What if Homer's and Keats's magic entrances us in part because somewhere in us sleeps a memory of miracles wrought in days when every rock and tree and river was alive with supernatural force? There is nothing fantastic in such a speculation. If we entertain it, we may find it illuminating the whole field of this discussion. At once we recall the almost incredibly vast and almost wildly "Romantic" mythology of Greece, the material and the inspiration of Greek poetry as it was the material and inspiration of Keats. Now the genuine mythology of Hellas first gathered shape in an age which believed in obvious magic, in the transformation of men and women into birds and beasts and trees and flowers, and in the living holiness of natural objects. Its origin is not explicable



on any other hypothesis. We have therefore to consider how it happened that Greek poetry, born (we must believe) in an atmosphere as redolent of magic as this mythology implies, came to divest itself of vulgar magic and "Celtic vagueness," till it came to appear to a critic like Arnold devoid also of the touch which he thinks exclusively characteristic of Romance.

It happened, no doubt, as part of that whole reaction to Barbarism which we call Hellenism. For magic is barbaric. The peoples all about Hellas believed in it of course, and had magicians practising it. In Greece itself the belief in magic lingered throughout Greek history, lingered that is to say in secluded places and among the many unenlightened. We hear of *Epôdoi*, "Charmers"; of *Goêtes*, "Groaners"; of *Baskanoi*, who had the evil eye—three varieties of wizard. There are echoes of a popular credence in the magical to be heard even in Greek literature, that disdainful and fastidious thing. In Homer we read that the wound received by Odysseus from the boar of Parnassus was closed by repeating an incantation over it. There is a good deal of white magic in the *Works and Days* of Hesiod. Nearly half of Aeschylus' *Choëphoroi* consists in an invocation or evocation of the ghost of dead Agamemnon. And so on. In later Hellenistic times there existed a great body of magical writings, born of the contact between Greek civilization and Oriental superstition. There must have been a public for this stuff. Professional miracle-workers were not uncommon, and some of them won a resounding popularity. The book of Pausanias, who wrote down what he heard and saw in the greater part of

Greece at the beginning of the second Christian century is strongly and—to you and me—pleasantly redolent of immemorial customs and beliefs among the peasantry. Many of these are plainly magical in their nature or their origin. The priests of Lykaian Zeus, he tells us, used to bring rain by dipping a branch in a certain stream and shaking it, sprinkling waterdrops. That, of course, was sheer magic—"making rain" as an African medicine-man would say. A custom of this sort, which has become a ritual, may be kept up after people have ceased quite to believe in the doctrine which it assumes as true. That, however, does not touch the historical significance of the custom, which must have arisen among people who believed in magic. Besides, the peasants in Pausanias' day were clearly very superstitious. His book is the proof of that. To suppose that in this respect they differed widely from their ancestors is to suppose something which common sense cries out against, and what evidence there is refutes.

Hellenism, then, the flower of the Greek spirit, grew in a soil impregnated with superstition, or, if you do not care for that word, with a religion containing many elements of magic. Every modern student of the subject, I fancy, admits that, although some scholars make more of the magical elements, some less. What no one can deny is that Hellenism tends to reject magic, and tries to expel it from human life. Magic was barbaric, and Hellenism was in reaction against Barbarism. Very likely the reaction went too far; reactions usually do. Very likely something too much was sacrificed to "Greek sanity." But it would be strange ingratitude on

our part to forget that it was this very urgency for the sane, for the rational, which ensured that our civilization was founded on hard realistic thinking, and not on a mere drift of emotionality. The task of thinking things out to their end, even to their bitter end, which was so characteristic of the Greeks, peculiarly fitted them for their task of laying intellectual foundations. It is not an English characteristic, and for that reason we are the more indebted to them. But scarcely less unjust would it be to suppose that the Greeks sacrificed everything to the rational. Nothing of the sort. They felt the charm to which the Celtic imagination yielded itself so utterly. But out of magic could not be built, they thought, any helpful philosophy or sound method of art. So their literature, when it deals with this matter and deals with it at its best, consciously or instinctively aims at drawing from it its full value for the imagination without for a moment permitting it to subdue the judgment. Any one reading in turn Mr. Yeats's *The Shadowy Waters* and that part of the *Odyssey* which deals with the adventures of Odysseus in magic-haunted lands will see what I mean. Yeats's hero yields himself to the charm; Odysseus fights against it. Which is the wiser is a question I leave to you. But here we have, in an illustration that is almost an epigram, the difference between the Celtic or extreme Romantic temper and the Hellenic temper. The Celt hears the Sirens and follows them; the Greek hears them and unwillingly sails past.

Or you may say: the Celtic gift is vision, the Hellenic gift is light.

Observe Homer's dealings with magic. He often



finds himself in its presence, and he deals with it in various ways. He leaves it out, he veils it, he transforms it. I am unable to see on what real grounds we can follow one of the most eminent of English scholars in Homer in dividing off the rest of the Homeric poems from those books of the *Odyssey* which tell of Odysseus' wanderings in unknown lands and seas. When does magic cease to be magic? Is it magic when Circe in the Odyssean fairyland changes men into swine, and not magic when Athena in Ithaca changes Odysseus into a beggar and herself into a bird? However, what Dr. Leaf has in mind is rather a difference which he feels in the whole atmosphere of these fairyland books, which the ancients knew by the title of the *Narrative to Alkinoos*, from the rest of the *Odyssey* and from the *Iliad*. The *Narrative*, he thinks, moves in places which it is hopeless to look for in the map. The geography of the rest is really to be found on the map, if you only know where to look for it. I might agree with this and yet hold (as I should) that the geographical point is deceptive. Odysseus does pass out of known into unknown lands, but he does not pass out of one atmosphere into another. There are more miracles and magic in the *Narrative* than in the rest of Homer, but the treatment of them is the same. Or, to put it somewhat differently, Phaeakia is just as real to me as Troy or Ithaca. And I fancy it was just as real to Homer.

After all, there is really very little overt magic in the *Narrative*, even if we include the wonder-working of the goddess Circe and other divine beings, who might be said to perform miracles rather than practise witchcraft. Of this wonder-working observe how

little is made : just as little as possible. The transformation and retransformation of Odysseus' companions is told in a line or two. Think what the *Kalevala* or the *Arabian Nights* would have made of it. The whole necromantic business of the Descent to Hades in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey* is transacted in a few formal, ritualistic phrases. Originally all that matter must have been steeped in magic. It is the same with Homer's treatment of the monstrous. The Homeric spirit objects to monsters ; and so you never notice, unless you look closely at the text, what horrible creatures the Sirens were. Scylla and Charybdis are not fully described ; much is left to the reader's imagination. The Cyclops, it must be allowed, is different. Homer, you see, *had* to make him eat Odysseus' men and *had* to put his eye out ; the story would not tell otherwise. But somehow the passage is not so ghastly as one would expect. It is full of remorseless description—the Cyclops vomits " wine and bits of human flesh "—and yet despite such " realism " the poet contrives to enfold our spirits in an air of enchantment—the true poetical enchantment—in which all things are at once vivid and remote, like a dream freshly remembered.

Homer of course is a problem, about which it is very hard to say anything that pleases everybody. There are on the one side scholars who think that our *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are only the final versions of two traditional poems, which were handled by many poets through a long succession of years. On the other side are those who believe that the two poems are entirely, or substantially, the work of a single early poet, who rose so far above his predecessors as

to owe little or nothing to them. This makes it difficult to argue a point in Homer with any general acceptance. But no student now seems to deny that Homer—whether we give the name to the one exceptional early poet or (tentatively) to the last of all those who worked on the poems—inherited something of his material. He did not invent the history of Troy, and he had to deal with it as he found it. Now all this traditional matter—for the matter is traditional whether the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* themselves are traditional poems or not—must to all appearance have been saturated in the magical. That is the normal condition of the stuff in which poetry, so far as we can see, everywhere takes its rise. Besides, the mythology of Greece, which it is fair to call the stuff of Greek poetry, is full of magic. The inference is that Homer and the Greek poets in general till the end of the “Classical” period sought to work out of their matter all that savoured of the magical.

I think it was Andrew Lang who first pointed out that Homer clearly avoids telling stories which are “morally objectionable.” Still more certainly we discover that stories which are quite inoffensive in Homer are excessively “objectionable” in other writers. What is the meaning of this? Is it that later generations defiled the golden innocence of Homeric days in their baser imaginations, or that Homer knew the other, more savage and ancient-seeming versions, and would not recount them? For my part I think Homer knew! And I think he knew about the magic also. There are constant transformations, particularly in the *Iliad*, of gods into human and animal forms. Is that magic or is it not?



Surely it is all of a piece with the "shape-shiftings" of wizards, so common in all mythologies; and these are admitted magic. But in the first place these transformations, as we remarked, are treated with a light and veiling hand, and secondly they are confined to the gods. What Homer allows to them he will not allow to mortals. He or his predecessors have erected the distinction between gods and men which forms one of the bases of Greek religion. Nay, you can trace in him, I believe, the beginnings of something more—a reluctance to speak even of the gods as performing these metamorphoses into brutish form. As a rule the Greeks did not mind such tales, or even clung to them from motives which can only be described as "Romantic." But Homer perhaps softens them down a good deal, and scarcely deserves the censure of Plato, who denounces them who would make a wizard of God. The metamorphoses in Homer are singularly unobtrusive. But why are they there at all? The answer must surely be because they were in the story and could not be left out altogether.

Am I forgetting that Homer was a poet and not a moralist? I think not. I might, with a show of reason, reply that the early Greek poet *was* a moralist, his aim (as Aristophanes puts it) "to make men better in their cities." But I prefer to say that Homer's objection to the monstrous and the grossly magical is really an æsthetic one. Other considerations come in as well, but the æsthetic consideration is found to be in the long run predominant. I once pointed out that many of the similes in Homer turn out, on closer examination, to involve an actual metamorphosis. An actual transformation—say of Athena into a

shooting-star — imperceptibly passes into a mere comparison. This is one device for reducing the magical element. But there are others. *So spake she*, says the poet of Helen, when she wondered why her brethren were not to be desried among the Greek host before Troy. *So spake she, but them the life-breathing earth was now holding fast in Lacedaemon, there, in their own native land.* *φυσίζοος αἶα*, “life-breathing earth,” as unhappy translators must say, derives half its poetical value as Ruskin saw (in this case at least justly enough) from the ancient belief, very strong in old Greece, that Earth was physically the mother of all life, the dear mother of gods and men. Again, who cannot see the passage before his eyes of physical into poetical magic in the lines where Zeus mourns the coming doom of his son Sarpedon? “*When soul and life have left him, send Death and sweet Sleep to carry him until they come to the land of broad Lycia, where his brethren and his kin will make an abiding barrow and pillar for him; for thus we honour the dead.*” So *Hera spake, and the Father of Gods and men obeyed her counsel; and he let fall blood-drops on the ground, honouring his son, that Patroklos was fated to slay in fruitful Troyland far from his native land.* What is Romantic poetry if this is not? And you see how it is produced? By a veiling of the crudely magical.

It is impossible to resist a little more quotation. *Father, cries Telemachus to Odysseus, verily a great marvel is this that I behold with mine eyes. Truly, the walls of the chambers, and the fair bases of the pillars, and the roof-beams of fir, and the columns that hold all on high are shining to my sight as if from flaming fire. Doubtless some god is in the house! It*

is in just such a light that we see all the Homeric world. It is not the witch's firelight, but it is the light in which the true poetical magic works. *Unhappy, what curse hath come upon you? In darkness your heads are rolled, and your faces, and your knees beneath you; a moan is enkindled, and cheeks are wet, and blood is on the walls and fair pedestals; ghosts in the doorway, ghosts in the courtyard of them that hasten to the dark world below; the sun hath perished out of heaven, and an evil mist is over you! So cries in the Odyssey the man with second sight. Is it not all very "Celtic"?*

In the ancient *Hymn to Demeter Persephone* is described as *playing with the deep-bosomed daughters of Ocean and culling flowers—rose and crocus and violet over the soft meadow, and iris and hyacinth and narcissus, which, by the will of Zeus, Earth, favouring Him of the Many Guests, sent up to snare the flower-faced maiden a glittering marvel for all to see with wondering eyes, both gods immortal and mortal men:—from the one root an hundred heads of blossom; very sweet the fragrance of that flower, and the delight of it made laugh wide heaven above, and all the earth, and the salt and surging waters.*

If this be not "natural magic," where shall we find it? And is there not something exquisite in the sense or tact which tells the Greek when to stop before the magic becomes too crude or obvious? The Greek poet knows when to stop, the Romantic not always. Here, in another of the *Hymns*, the *Hymn to Dionysus* (VII), is the frank description of a miracle. *But soon marvellous things were shown among them. First, over the swift black ship sweet, odorous wine was plashing, and a divine perfume arose;*



*and amaze took hold of all the gazing mariners. Anon, along the topmost edge of the sail a vine laid out its tendrils here and there; thick hung the clusters; and round the mast dark ivy twined, deep in flowers and pleasant with berries, and all the thole-pins were garlanded.* For sheer loveliness of fancy it would not be easy to beat that. And how great an effect is gained by temperance! A little more detail and the charm would be dissolved—the ship would be too like a Christmas tree. It is in such wise economies that Greek art is so great. It is just in them that the Romantic is apt to fail. Therein he bewrays his Barbarism.

I will no longer doubt that the reader (who probably did not require the demonstration) is convinced that Greek poetry occasionally attains those very effects of “natural magic” which Arnold denied it. What has happened is merely this: Greek poetry has carried farther than any other a process of refining out some elements in the crude material in which it began. That it may have lost in the process a certain amount of the purest gold I am not denying. I am not pleading the cause of Greek poetry, I am trying to understand it. It is thought by scholars that poetry has everywhere been developed out of a kind of song or chorus, which (to put it gently) is very often magical in character. One at last gets things like some of the Russian folk-songs or the Finnish lays which Lönnrot collected to form the *Kalevala*. It is a pity the *Kalevala* has not found an adequate English translator. One may honestly wish that Longfellow had translated it instead of giving us *Hiawatha*, which is a somewhat close imitation. One may delight in *Hiawatha*, but one can see in the baldest

translation (as it were with half an eye) that *Kalevala* is fifty times better. If you want magic, and very delightful magic, go there ! It seems to me, remembering, that all the chief characters in the *Kalevala* are sorcerers. In the very first lay you are lost in the forest of enchantment, and you never get out of it. The *Kalevala* is not the highest kind of poetry of course ; it is (as Mrs. Barbauld complained of *The Ancient Mariner*) too "improbable" for that. But it pleases our taste because it is so desperately "Romantic."—But you are not going to say that it is as good as the *Odyssey* ?

The truth, of course, is that poetry like the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* and the *Agamemnon*, just as much as *The Divine Comedy* and *Hamlet*, gets beyond these distinctions of Romantic and Classical. I daresay there is as much, in proportion, of this kind of poetry in Greek as even in our own literature. At any rate, there seems to be no doubt that the greatest poetry is not written except on Greek principles. There must be that "fundamental brain-work," as Rossetti called it, which is the characteristic Greek contribution to art. You may put a less rigid interpretation upon the Hellenic maxims, you may apply them in ever so many new fields, but the essence of them you must keep. The Barbarian may be picturesque enough, but he is not an artist : he loses his head.

It would be enormously interesting to consider how a passage like this—

*I was but seven year auld,  
When my mither she did dee ;  
My father married the ae warst woman  
The world did ever see.*

*For she changed me to the laily worm,  
That lies at the fit o' the tree,  
And my sister Masery  
To the machrel of the sea.*

*And every Saturday at noon  
The machrel comes to me,  
An' she takes my laily head  
An' lays it on her knee,  
And kames it wi' a siller kame,  
And washes it i' the sea—*

which is pure magic, such as you might find in the *Kalevala*, is transformed into a passage like

*"O haud your tongue o' weeping," he says,  
"Let a' your follies a-bee ;  
I'll show you where the white lilies grow  
On the banks o' Italie"—*

which is Romantic poetry at its best—or into

*Now Johnnie's gude bend-bow is broke,  
And his gude gray dogs are slain ;  
And his body lies dead in Durrisdeer ;  
And his hunting it is done—*

which is the Classical style very nearly at its best. But an essay must end after a reasonable time. Besides there is something else I want to say about the Classical and the Romantic.



## II

ARNOLD expressed the difference between the Greek and the Celtic or Romantic spirit by the word *Titanism*. That is a very happy expression, happier even than Arnold knew, unless he knew what we said about the Titans. For Titanism is just Barbarism in heroic proportions. It is the spirit of the Old Kings—the “Strainers,” as Hesiod, etymologizing, calls them—who failed because they would not discipline their strength. With some of Arnold’s language about the Celtic character, and the “failure” in practical affairs of the Celtic race, it is unnecessary now for any one to concern himself, for no one now uses that kind of language. Even if it were justified it would scarcely be relevant, since success in literature depends (as of course Arnold saw) on qualities quite other than those which may be relied upon to give us success in life. It is the Titanism of the Celt, says Arnold, which makes him a failure in the world of affairs, but in compensation gives him the gift of style. We need not accept that way of putting the matter, but I do not think we can fairly deny either the style or the Titanism.

The Greeks had their measure of Titanism also, and very certainly their measure of style. Arnold quotes from Henri Martin a description of the Celt

as *always ready to react against the despotism of fact*. Whereupon the Greek student instantly remembers that this is just what Cleon said about the Athenians. He will also remember that a Corinthian politician said that they seemed to him to be *born neither to be quiet themselves nor to let other people be quiet*. Any one who fails to notice the unappeasable restlessness of the Greek temperament will miss a great piece of its quality. It comes out in the Greek attitude to Hope, which set ancient hearts beating with a violence which frightened them and extremely surprises us. It comes out in the popular conception of Alexander the Great as one marching on and on in a dream of never-ending victories. It comes out in spite of Arnold. He quotes from Byron :

*Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,  
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,  
And know, whatever thou hast been,  
'Tis something better not to be.*

He thinks this characteristically Celtic. So perhaps it is. But it is characteristically Greek too. It is a commonplace of Greek poetry. Then he quotes :

*What though the field be lost,  
All is not lost, the unconquerable will,  
And study of revenge, immortal hate,  
And courage never to submit or yield,  
Or what is else not to be overcome.*

This also he calls Celtic, although he knew his *Prometheus Bound*, and might have reflected that Milton knew it too. At last Arnold flings up his case, and describes a passage quoted to support his antithesis as, up to a certain point, "Greek in its

clear beauty " ; and when he wishes to find a name for the Celtic "intoxication of style" goes to a Greek poet for his word and comes back with *Pindarism*.

That shows how impossible it is to press these critical distinctions. Still one sees what Arnold is driving at, and one may go with him most of the way. It is quite true that Celtic literature is full of Titanism. But it is an error to say that Titanism is strange to Greek art. There is far more of it in Celtic, and in Romantic literature generally, than in classical literature, and this does produce a striking difference between them. But it is only a difference of method and emphasis. Titanism appeals to the Romantic, and he gives himself up to it. The Greek feels the attraction too, but he fights against it, and over Titanism he puts something which he thinks is better.

Thus it is part of the Romantic mood to love a strange and hyperbolical speech. We see the Romantic poet or his hero like a man increased to superhuman proportions and making enormous gestures in a mist. This effect is not beyond the reach of any true poet, and it has been achieved by Aeschylus better perhaps than by any one before or since. We must return to this point. Here we need only remark that the Greeks could manage the poetical hyperbole when they pleased. But it is only the Romantic, or if you like the Celtic poets, who never tire of it. Again, it is a mistake to believe that there is no symbolism in ancient literature. But what there is differs greatly from modern "Symbolism." Our "Symbolism" employs certain accepted symbols, which allusively and discreetly



recombining it sets the spirit dreaming. Ancient art kept its symbols—I do not know if the word be not misapplied—separate and definite. But it had them. The background of the *Agamemnon*, for instance, is crowded with symbols. It is all lit up by triumphal and ruinous fires with (passing unscathed through it all) the phantasmal beauty of Helen; while students of metre have observed that the heart of the verse beats faster and slower as she comes and goes. This symbolical use of fire, and Helen's form, of dreams and tempest and purple and much else, is profoundly and intricately studied in the play. But it is not like modern Symbolism, which is often content to gaze ecstatically on the symbol itself, instead of using it dramatically to flood a situation with the light that is hidden in the heart of Time.

So all these differences resolve themselves into a change of attitude, which nevertheless is no small matter. Though not the foundations of life itself, yet man's reading of life changes; and it is just the play of this inconstant factor upon the fixed bases of the soul which produces that creative ferment from which all art is born.

This may be seen in one matter of peculiar interest in the history of art—the passion of love. One constantly finds it said that Romantic love is a purely mediæval and modern thing. Those who make this statement might reflect that so profound and intimate an emotion is not likely to have been discovered so late in the human story. And it was not. Since there is perhaps a good deal of vagueness in our notions of what Romantic love is, let us take it here to mean the passion whose creed is, in Dryden's

phrase, *All for Love and the World well Lost*. Was such a passion unknown in antiquity? Was not that very phrase of *All for Love* used of the Greek Cleopatra, who is one of the world's famous lovers? Did not Medea leave all for love's sake, and Orpheus, and the shepherd Daphnis, whose legend is the more significant because it appears to be pure folk-story? Have not all poets of Romantic love turned instinctively to Greek mythology as the inexhaustible quarry of their lore? That they treat the myths in their own way is not to be denied. But they would not turn to them at all if they felt that those stories had been moulded by an alien spirit. Then, so far as one can judge from the haplessly scanty fragments of Greek lyrical poetry, the Romantic spirit was strong in that. Sappho and the fine poet Ibykos were wholly given over and enslaved to love; and the great and bitter heart of Archilochus hardly escaped from it with curses. In the Alexandrian era it flowers in poetry anew. One might take perhaps as typical of the extreme Romantic mood the considerable fragment left us of Hermesianax. It is little more than a numbering of famous lovers for pure delight in their names. There is a trifle of childishness in the piece, and a trifle of artificiality, yet it is not without a haunting loveliness like that which clings to the *Catalogue of the Women* in Homer. It is no accidental kinship. An underground river has burst up again. One finds it flowing unchecked in the *Argonautika* of Apollonios.

You may have noticed that none of my examples was taken from the greatest period of Greek literature, the Attic age. That also is no accident. For it is then that the hostile spirit most effectively

comes in. The capacity for Romantic love was not at any time denied to the Greek nature. But what happened was this: the great age applied, as to the other passions, so to love, its doctrine of *Sophrosyne*. What was the result? Love became terrible and to be shunned in exact proportion to its power over the soul. And on the Greek soul love had great power; no one ought to be mistaken about that. *Of old He has been called a tyrant*, says Plato of Eros. It is a famous saying of Plato again that love is a form of madness. Sophocles, we remember, compared it to a wild beast. Such language is habitual with the Attic poets. (It is used, for example, by both Sophocles and Euripides in the famous odes invoking Eros, the one in *Antigone*, the other in *Hippolytus*.) It is not at all the language of Romance; it does not say *All for Love*. Indeed when we consider it more closely, we find that it means the exact opposite of what the extreme Romantic means. The Greek means that he has conquered, the Romantic that he has surrendered. There is, to be sure, in the Romantic theory, examined in cold blood, a certain amount of bravado. A great imaginative passion is rare enough to be more than a nine days' wonder. Such an objection has no weight in the world of art, but it is extremely in point when we are contrasting the actual conditions of ancient and modern life. It will turn out in the long run that in ancient Greece men felt love as much as we, but felt about it differently. They were for self-mastery, we for ecstasy. They were Greeks, and we are Barbarians.

They were also, one may believe, in this the truer artists. There is nothing more characteristic of the



artist than his capacity to bind his emotions to the service of his art.

*To be in a passion you good may do,  
But no good if a passion is in you*

is his thought. The man who said that said also *The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction*. The two sentiments are in fact not incompatible, but it takes an artist to reconcile them. The poor plain modern man always divines something immoral in this attitude. As to that, it is easiest to reply that it all depends. But surely the Greek is the only sound artistic doctrine. No one will write very well who cannot control his inspiration. A platitude no doubt, but a platitude which in these days seems very easily forgotten. The mere emotion is not enough. Tannhäuser has suggested great poetry; he could not have written any, for that would have required moral energy.

It might be thought a subterfuge to leave this topic without a word on a matter which cannot be ignored. I believe a very few words will suffice. But it is as well to make clear a point which has not been observed by those who claim the Greek example as a confirmation of their view that all experiences are permissible to the artist. The point is this. It was not in the artistic portion of the Greek people that the kind of sexual perversity, so often indiscriminately attributed to the Hellenes in general, was most widely prevalent. It was chiefly a Dorian vice, fostered by the Dorian camp-life, though I dare say it was to some extent endemic in the Near East. The Ionians (including the Athenians), who

inherited nine-tenths of the Hellenic genius, unhesitatingly condemned such practices, even if they themselves were somewhat infected by them. Athenian bourgeois morality was quite sound on that point, as you may see by merely reading Aristophanes. His attitude is really remarkable, and, so far as we can see, there is only one possible explanation : the Athenian people would not tolerate the Dorian sin upon the stage. Yet you know what they did tolerate, and what the comic tradition tolerated. It would take a lot to stop Aristophanes.

Another point may be put in the form of a question. How, on the assumption of Greek perversity, are we to account for the exceptional sanity of Greek thought and sentiment ? It does not seem humanly possible that a pathological condition of the body should not result in a morbid state of the mind. Yet I never could hear of anybody who called the Greeks morbid. It is to be surmised that certain passages in Plato have been the chief source of the misconception, or exaggerated impression, which is still perhaps too prevalent. Now with regard to what is called Platonic Love, there are two things which ought not to be forgotten. One is this. The young men with whom Socrates used to talk—who were not, you know, in any proper sense, his disciples—were apt to be members of a tiny minority, among what we should call the upper classes at Athens, who professed what strikes us as a very unnecessary “philolaconism” or cult of things Spartan. Some of these young people certainly practised or trifled with the Dorian offence, and Socrates was willing to discuss the matter with them. He was the more willing to do this because he held a very definite

view himself. He condemned the fleshly sin outright, though not perhaps uncompromisingly. But he attached the very highest value to the association of friends, an older and a younger, and he wished this comradeship to be intense enough to merit the name of love. This leads to the second point. You must judge ancient love—I mean this love of man and boy—by its ideal, as you insist on judging Romantic love. So judged, it often appears a fine and noble thing. That it sometimes sank in the mire is no more than can be said of modern love. Do not, at any rate, let us be hypocritical.

It is time to recover the thread of our original argument, which was to this effect, that the contrast of Hellenism and Barbarism appears in literature as the contrast of Classical and Romantic. Just as Hellene and Barbarian are correlative terms, so you cannot understand Classical art without reference to Romance, nor Romantic art in isolation from the Classics. But again, just as Greek and Barbarian are equally human, so Classical and Romantic art are alike art. The difference in the end is a difference of degree or (in another way of putting it) of tendencies. The great vice of the Barbarian is that he has no self-restraint. There cannot be art of any kind without restraint, and the Barbarian *pur sang*, if he exist, must be incapable of art. But it is not he we are discussing; it is the artistic expression of Barbarism which we call Romance. Now observe how clearly, within the limits imposed by art, Romance reveals the bias of the Barbarian temperament. In literature it comes out in the form of hyperbole or artistic exaggeration. It will not be denied that Romance indulges a good



deal in that. The Greeks fought shy of it. To deal largely in it was likely to bring upon the writer the epithet of ψυχρός, "frigid"—a curious charge to us, who are inclined to look upon exaggeration as natural to a fiery spirit. They thought it the mere spluttering of a weak nature, which could not master and direct its inward flame.

Yet the Romantic exaggeration can be very fine. I agree with Arnold in liking a good deal a passage which he quotes in an abridged form from the *Mabinogion*. *Search is made for Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken when three nights old from between his mother and the wall. The seekers go first to the Ousel of Cilgwri; the Ousel had lived long enough to peck a smith's anvil down to the size of a nut, but he had never heard of Mabon. "But there is a race of animals who were formed before me, and I will be your guide to them." So the Ousel guides them to the Stag of Redynvre. The Stag has seen an oak sapling, in the wood where he lived, grow up to be an oak with a hundred branches, and then slowly decay down to a withered stump, yet he had never heard of Mabon. "But I will be your guide to the place where there is an animal which was formed before I was"; and he guides them to the Owl of Cwm Cawlwyd. "When first I came hither," says the Owl, "the wide valley you see was a wooded glen. And a race of men came and rooted it up. And there grew a second wood; and this wood is the third. My wings, are they not withered stumps?" Yet the Owl, in spite of his great age, had never heard of Mabon, but he offered to be guide "to where is the oldest animal in the world, and the one that has travelled most, the Eagle of Gwern Abbey." The Eagle was so old, that a rock, from the top of which*

*he pecked at the stars every evening, was now not so much as a span high.*

The popular belief in the great age of certain animals appears in many lands, and appeared in ancient Greece. It is expressed in an old poem, attributed to Hesiod, called *The Precepts of Chiron*. *Nine lives of men grown old lives the cawing crow ; four lives of a crow lives the stag ; the raven sees the old age of three stags ; but the phoenix lives as long as nine ravens, as long as ten phoenixes we, the Nymphs with beautiful hair, daughters of agis-bearing Zeus.* Compared with the Celtic passage, the quotation from "Hesiod" is poor and dry and like a multiplication sum. The Celtic imagination, with its fine frenzy, is at home in the region of popular fancy, and deals with it effectively ; whereas the Greek method, if employed without art, spoils everything. You will observe that "Hesiod," in spite of his vastly greater moderation (herein at least showing himself Greek), does not really succeed in being any more convincing to the imagination, while he does not impress it at all as the Celt impresses it. Employed with the art of Homer, or indeed of Hesiod at his best, the Greek method should at once impress the imagination and convince it. If it can do this, it clearly excels the method of impressing the imagination by a process akin to stunning it. One ought probably to prefer Hesiod at his driest to mere senseless hyperbole even in a passage where a little hyperbole is in place. There is a future to Hesiod's style in the hands of an imaginative artist, while there is no possible artistic future to mere shrieking. The Celtic method is always committing suicide.

Arnold quotes again from the *Mabinogion* : *Drem,*

*the son of Dremidyd (when the gnat arose in the morning with the sun, Drem could see it from Gelli Wic in Cornwall, as far off as Pen Blathaon in North Britain).* Here is what the ancient epic called the *Cypria* says: *Climbing the topmost peak he sent his glance through all the Isle of Pelops son of Tantalos, and soon the glorious hero spied with his wondrous eyes horse-taming Castor and conquering Polydeukês inside the hollow oak.* The superiority of the Classical style is now beginning to assert itself. The exaggeration in the Greek passage is immense, but it does suspend incredulity for a moment—and the moment in art is everything—while the Celtic passage pays no attention to verisimilitude at all, and therefore really misses its effect. (If you think we are here dealing with magic rather than simple hyperbole, the answer will be much the same.) What Euripides says about shame we may say about exaggeration; that there is a good kind and a bad. The good is, so to speak, intensive; the bad, merely extensive. The excellent method of hyperbole reflects some large hidden significance of it may be a little thing or a trifling action. The inartistic hyperbole is just overstatement—impressing nobody.

Any one who has read even a little of the old Celtic literature must have been struck by the presence in it of a very large element of enormous and almost frantic exaggeration. I speak very much under correction, as I have to work with translations, but no one can be wrong about so plain a matter. I have indeed heard a man who reads Irish say that in his opinion some of the exaggeration was merely humorous; but even this scholar did not deny that the exaggeration was there, and plenty of



it. From the *Táin Bó Cúalnge* (the chief document of early Ireland) translated by Professor Joseph Dunn, I take part of the description of Cuchulain in one of his fits of rage. *He next made a ruddy bowl of his face and his countenance. He gulped down one eye into his head so that it would be hard work if a wild crane succeeded in drawing it out on to the middle of his cheek from the rear of his skull. Its mate sprang forth till it came out on his cheek, so that it was the size of a five-fist kettle, and he made a red berry thereof out in front of his head. His mouth was distorted monstrously and twisted up to his ears. He drew the cheek from the jaw-bone so that the interior of his throat was to be seen. His lungs and his lights stood out so that they fluttered in his mouth and his gullet. He struck a mad lion's blow with the upper jaw on its fellow so that as large as a wether's fleece of a three year old was each red, fiery flake which his teeth forced into his mouth from his gullet. There was heard the loud clap of his heart against his breast like the yelp of a howling bloodhound or like a lion going among bears. There were seen the torches of the Badb, and the rain clouds of poison, and the sparks of glowing-red fire, blazing and flashing in hazes and mists over his head with the seething of the truly wild wrath that rose up above him. His hair bristled all over his head like branches of a redthorn thrust into a gap in a great hedge. Had a king's apple-tree laden with royal fruit been shaken around, scarce an apple of them all would have passed over him to the ground, but rather would an apple have stayed stuck on each single hair there, for the twisting of the anger which met it as it rose from his hair above him. The Lon Laith ("Champion's Light") stood out*

of his forehead, so that it was as long and as thick as a warrior's whetstone, so that it was as long as his nose, till he got furious handling the shields, thrusting out the charioteer, destroying the hosts. As high, as thick, as strong, as steady, as long as the sail-tree of some huge prime ship was the straight spout of dark blood which arose right on high from the very ridge-pole of his crown, so that a black fog of witchery was made thereof like to the smoke from a king's hostel what time the king comes to be ministered to at nightfall of a winter's day.

It would be mistaken and dull criticism to blame anything so characteristic as bad in itself. If such exaggerations are bad, it must be because the whole class of literature to which they belong is bad. But any one who should say that would be (not to put too fine a point upon it) an ass. Still, it would be paradoxical to maintain that the passage just quoted is in quite the best manner of writing. Cuchulain reminds one of Achilles, and it is instructive to compare the treatment of Cuchulain in the *Táin Bó Cúalnge* with the treatment of Achilles in the *Iliad*. In one sense the comparison is infinitely unfair. It is matching what some have thought the greatest poem in the world against something comparatively rude and primitive. But it is done merely to illustrate a point of art. In other respects no injustice happens. If one takes the combat of Ferdiad and Cuchulain, which is the crowning episode of the *Táin*, with the combat between Hector and Achilles, which is perhaps the crowning episode of the *Iliad*, one cannot fail to see that the advantage in valour, and chivalry, and the essential pathos of the situation is all on the Irish side. But in the pure art of the narrative,

what a difference! The *Táin*, not without skill, works through a climax of tremendous feats to an impression of deadly force and skill in its hero. But it is all considerably overdone, and at last you are so incredulous of Cuchulain's intromissions with the "Gae Bulga" (that mysterious weapon) that you cease to be afraid of him. What does Homer do? He shows you two lonely figures on the Plain of Troy; Hector before the Skaian gate, and Achilles far off by the River Skamandros. And as Hector strengthens his heart for the duel which must be fatal to one, nearer and nearer, with savage haste, the sun playing on his armour, comes running Achilles. Nothing happens, only this silent, tireless running of a man. But it gets on your nerves just as it got on Hector's.

Or take that singular description of the Champion's Light. It so happens that Achilles also has something of the kind. But what is grotesque in the case of Cuchulain, in the case of Achilles has a startling effect of reality. The Trojans have defeated the Achaeans and come very near the ships in the absence of Achilles from the battle, when suddenly to the exulting foe the hero shows himself once more. *Round his head the holy goddess twisted a golden cloud, and lit therefrom an all-shining flame. And as when a smoke rising from a town goes up to the sky in a distant isle besieged by fighting men, and all day the folk contend in hateful battle before their town, but with the setting of the sun thick flame the bale-fires, and the glare shoots up on high for the dwellers round to see, so haply they may come in their ships to ward off ruin—so from Achilles' head the light went up to heaven. From the wall to the trench he went, he stood—not*



*mingling with the Achaeans, for he regarded his mother's wise behest. There standing he shouted—and, aloof, Athena called ; but among the Trojans was aroused confusion infinite. . . . And the charioteers were astonisht when they saw burning above the head of the great-hearted son of Peleus the unwearied, awful fire, that the goddess, grey-eyed Athena, made to burn.* The poet, you see, does not fairly describe the Champion's Light, he describes its effect. In the same way the face of Helen is never described, only the effect she had on the old men of Troy. Such art is beyond our praising.

It may be complained that I am taking extreme examples—of Hellenic tact and moderation on the one hand, of Romantic extravagance on the other. This is admitted, but the process seems justifiable ; you must let me illustrate my point. The argument is that the Romantic style tends to a more lavish employment of hyperbole than does the Greek. I cannot imagine any one denying it. Read of some nightmare feat of strength in a Celtic story, and then read something in Homer (am I giving too much of Homer ?)—something like this : *Aias the son of Telamon was first to slay a man, smiting him with a ragged stone, that was within the wall by the battlement, piled huge atop of all, nor might a man with ease upbear it in both his arms, even in full lustihead of youth—such as men are now . . . but Aias swang and hurled it from on high.* How moderation tells ! How much more really formidable is this Aias than Aeneas when Virgil (with Roman or Celtic exaggeration) says that he cast “ no small part of a mountain ” !

A matter of this delicacy will mock at a rigid handling. There is no rule to be laid down at all save

the rule that is above rules, the instinct of the artist. The limits of exaggeration—and there is a sense in which all art is exaggeration—shift with the shifting of what one may call the horizon of the soul. It is clear, for instance, that the atmosphere of the Domestic Drama or the Descriptive Poem is markedly different from that of the Heroic Epic or the Choral Ode. A *gafe* appropriate to Oliver or Kapaneus would sound very strangely on the lips of Holy Willie or Peter Bell; it could only be mock-heroic or parody. One's sensitiveness to these atmospheres, then, the temperament of the reader, his critical taste, the character of his education—all that and more affect his response to what he reads. We have had a different experience from the ancients and live, as it were, in different emotional scenery. Hyperbole counts for more in our art than it did in theirs. To the device in itself there could be no possible objection. When one thinks of the superb and intoxicating hyperboles of Romantic literature from the winding of Roland's horn to the *Playboy of the Western World*; when one thinks how largely they serve to make the style of Shakespeare; the Greeks appear a little timid in comparison. Perhaps they were, although I cannot believe it was timidity that ailed them. Only they guarded more strictly against a danger they felt more keenly than we, into which we have more frequently fallen.

Art of course must go where its own winds and currents carry it. To forbid it to be itself because it is not Greek is extreme, though happily impotent, nonsense. But it will be extraordinarily interesting to see how modern art is going to save itself from the two extremes of brutality and sentimentalism—the

faults of the Barbarian—with which it is so manifestly and so painfully struggling. The Greeks solved that problem, and their solution stands. Meanwhile a student of Greek may help a little by explaining what the solution is. For it has been greatly misunderstood.

The secret was half recovered in the Renaissance. Thus in England Milton learned from the Greeks the value of form for the concentration of meaning, and that poetry should be not only “sensuous and passionate” but also “simple.” But the Renaissance had drunk too deep of the new wine to keep its head quite steady; and this, in turn, helped to provoke a Puritanic reaction which distrusted the arts, and therefore differed widely from Greek asceticism, which was itself a kind of art. The Restoration produced a new orientation of the English spirit, and a new interpretation of the Classical. Repelled by the extravagances and the frequently outrageous slovenliness of decadent Elizabethanism, the age of Dryden, communicating its impulse to the age of Pope, fell in love with the quietness and temperance of the ancients, and above all with their accomplishment of form. This admiration was an excellent and salutary thing for the times. But it seemed content to gaze on the surface. There arose a poetry which aimed above all at mere correctness. As if Greek poetry aimed at nothing but that!

The modern Romantic movement—I mean the new spirit in English literature which *Lyrical Ballads* is regarded as initiating—was largely a revolt against eighteenth-century Classicism. Yet it cannot fairly be said that the Romantics introduced a juster conception of Classical art. They started with a prejudice



against it, which their discovery of the Middle Ages merely confirmed. Wordsworth indeed (who had much of the eighteenth century in him) felt the attraction of Classical art, but his best work is not in things like *Laodamia*. Landor is not Greek, any more than Leconte de Lisle is Greek. They have Greek perfection of form, but (except at his rare best Landor) they are glacial ; they have not the banked and inward-burning fire which makes Sappho, for example, so different. It has been thought that no English poet has come nearer than Keats to recapturing the ancient secret. The *Ode to a Grecian Urn* nearly does recapture it. But not quite. *Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty* is very Greek ; but it is not Greek to forget, as Keats and his followers have been apt to forget, the second half of their aphorism. So the Greek poets aimed less directly at beauty than at the truth of things, which they believed to be beautiful ; and this realism—this effort to realize the world as it is—remains, in spite of the large element of convention in Greek poetry, the most characteristic thing about the Greek poetical genius.

In the very midst of the Romantic movement we find Matthew Arnold pleading for a return to Hellenic standards. The plea had curiously little effect. If you read *Merope* immediately after *Atalanta in Calydon*, you will scarcely wonder at that. Arnold in fact saw only half the truth. He cries for Greek sanity and absence of caprice ; he does not cry for Greek intensity, Greek realism. He pleads for tact and moderation—in a word, for that good manners in style which had seemed so important to the eighteenth century. The doctrine was too negative for the age. It can hardly be said to inspire the best

work of Arnold himself. Yes, that is just what is wrong with it, it does not *inspire*; and so, although based on a right instinct, it does not really lift him above his time. He did not care for Tennyson, whom he accused of affectation. But he would not have understood the twentieth century's objection to Tennyson, that he lacked the courage of his genius. If he had understood it, he would no doubt have sided with Tennyson, for Arnold was, after all, mainly "Victorian." But what do you suppose Aristophanes would have said about Tennyson? If the answer is not at once obvious, the reason must be the difficulty that would arise in getting a Greek of Aristophanes' time to understand the Victorian timidities at all.

The present age is said to be extremely in revolt against Victorianism. Unfortunately one may be in full revolt and yet be only shaking one's chains. There is a thing that is fairly clear. The paroxysmal art of the hour must bring its inevitable reaction. The cry will again be heard for a return to urbanity and a stricter form, and people will again call these things Classical, as if this were all the Classics have to offer. And then in due time will come once more the counter-swing of the pendulum. Well, perhaps art depends more than we think upon this ceaseless movement; for all art aims at giving the effect of life, and life is in movement.

### III

WERE it not for an original propriety in the distinction, it would be better not to speak at all of "Classical" and "Romantic." This seems clearly to be the fault of modern criticism, which has hidden the path under so deep a fall of many-coloured leaves, that now one must spend a deal of time merely in sweeping them up. It is annoying how inapt are current terms of criticism to express the essence of ancient literature. I have hinted that it might almost be expressed in the word "realism," and at once I am checked by the reflection that realism in modern speech appears to mean anything you like. How, then, is a man to avoid being misunderstood? But he has to take the risk; and on the whole it will be safer for him to grasp this runaway by the hair than to sow more definitions in a soil already exhausted.

Greek literature is realistic in the sense that it aims at producing the effect of reality, not by the accumulation of startling details—which perhaps is what is usually meant in these days by realism—but by a method of its own. Greek literature is marked by a unique sincerity, or veracity, or candour, equally foreign to violence and to sentimentality—a bitter man might say, equally foreign to what we now call



realism and to what we now call idealism. So profound is this truthfulness that we (who cry out daily for a resolute fidelity to fact in our writers) have not yet sounded it. It needs a long plummet. So many of us have come to imagine that the truth of a situation is not apparent except in flashes of lightning—preferably red lightning—which the Greeks thought distorting. We think we are candid, and we are not so very candid. I could never be one of those fanatical champions of antiquity to whom the modern is merely the enemy. Their position is so pathetically untenable that one can only with a sigh busy oneself with something that really matters. But, however modern I may feel, I cannot get myself to believe that we attain so perfect a truthfulness as the Greeks. We have written volumes about the “Classical Ideal,” and we are apt to contrast “Hellenic Idealism” with our uncompromising modern “Realism” and “Naturalism.” And all the time the Greeks have had a truer realism than we.

For instance, we have of late almost made a speciality of wounds and death. You could not say this of any ancient writer. Curiously enough, you might say it with less impropriety of Homer than of any other. A warrior, he says, was pierced to the heart by a spear, *and the throbbing of the heart made also the butt of the spear to quiver*. That gives you a pretty satisfactory shiver. Menelaos smote Peisandros *above the root of the nose ; and the bones cracked, and his eyes dropped bloody in the dust of the ground at his feet*. This is how Peneleos treated Ilioneus. *He wounded him under the eyebrow where the eye is embedded and forced out the ball, and the spear went*

*clean through the eye and through the muscle behind, and the wounded man crouched down, spreading out his hands; but Peneleos drawing his sharp sword smote his neck in the midst and dashed the head on the ground, helmet and all; and the heavy spear was still in the eye, and he raised up the head like a poppy.* I suspect your modern realist of envying that image of the bloody head stuck "through the eye" on a spear and looking like a "poppy" or a "poppy-head" on its stalk. Another unfortunate fighter was hit *down the mouth* with a spear, which penetrated *under the brain and broke the white bones; and the teeth were shaken out and both his eyes were filled with blood, and with a gape he sent the blood gushing up his mouth and down his nostrils.* The youngest son of King Priam was wounded by Achilles *beside the navel, and so dropped moaning on his knees and clutched his entrails to him with his hands*—a passage remembered by Pater.

From it and the others it may be seen that Homer, when he likes, can be as grisly as Mr. Sassoon. But they are not typical of Homer, still less of the ancient Greek writers in general. It is not their way to obtrude details. Their aim is to give you the whole situation, and to give it truly. Their method is to select the significant, rather than the merely striking, details. Such a theory and method are best entitled, on reflection, to the name of realism. Kebriones, the charioteer in Homer, has his forehead crushed in by a stone, and a terrible battle is waged over his body. The poet in the heat of his battle thinks for a moment of the dead man. *But he in the whirling dust-storm lay, with large limbs largely fallen, forgetful of his horse-manship.* No insistence here on the ghastly wound.

The reader for a breathing space is rapt from the blood and the horror into quiet spaces of oblivion. Is not this, just here, the right note to strike—and not the other? It gives the whole situation—the roaring tumult above, the unheeding body underneath—not merely one aspect. It is the more real because it is not simply painful.

Contrast, again, the Greek with the mediæval and the modern attitudes to death. See how many of the passages on death you can recall in writers not ancient are inspired by a grotesque or reflective horror, or ring with a hopeful or hopeless defiance. Think of Villon on death, and Raleigh, and Donne, and Shakespeare's Claudio, and *Hydriotaphia*, and Browning, and Swinburne. There is nothing in the great age of Greek literature even remotely comparable to the gorgeous variety of these dreams and invocations. But if the question is of realism (as we are understanding it), if we resolve to see death as it is, neither transformed by hope nor blurred by tears, see if the ancients have not the advantage.

They will disappoint you at first. (But remember you are asking for realism.) Thus when Aristotle in his dry manner says, *Death is the most fearful thing ; for it is an end, and nothing after it seems to the dead man either good or bad*, you may think it a poor attitude to strike. But Aristotle is not striking an attitude at all, he is simply facing a fact. He may be wrong, of course, but that is how death looks to Aristotle, and he is not going to gild the pill either for you or for himself. But if you miss in Aristotle the thrill of the greatest literature, you must feel it in the last words of Socrates to the judges who had condemned him. *But now is come the hour of departure,*



*for me that have to die, for you that have still to live ; but which path leads to a better lot is hidden from all but God.* And with that Socrates falls silent, leaving the reader silent too, and a little ashamed perhaps of our importunate hells and heavens.

Odysseus meets the ghost of Achilles in Hades and speaks of the great honour in which the young hero is held here. *Not of death*, replies Achilles, *speak thou in words of comfort, glorious Odysseus ! Rather above ground would I be the hired servant of a man without a lot, whose livelihood is but small, than reign over all the perished dead.* The truth as he sees it is what you get from the Greek every time. Odysseus hears it from Achilles, the greatest of the dead. He hears it from Elpênor, one of the least. (Elpênor got drunk in Circe's house and, feeling hot, wandered on to the roof, where he fell asleep, and everybody forgot about him. In the morning he was aroused by the noise of people moving about and jumped up, forgetting where he was, and fell backwards from the roof and broke his neck.) *Ah, go not and leave me behind unwept and unburied, turning thy back on me, lest I become a vessel of the wrath of gods upon thee ; but bury me with all mine armour, and by the margin of the whitening sea heap me a high grave of a man that had no luck, that even after ages may know. This do for me, and on my grave plant the oar with which, alive, I rowed among my comrades.* The natural pathos of this must touch everybody. But I wonder if everybody feels how much of its effect is due to an almost harsh avoidance of sentimentality, as in that hidden threat of the pleading ghost. And even that piercing last line about the oar—it may grieve certain readers to know that setting up an

oar on the grave was merely part of a ritual usually observed in the burial of a dead mariner.

The *corpus* of Greek inscriptions naturally contains a great many epitaphs. There is not one, belonging to what we think of as the great age of Greece, that has the least grain of smugness or hypocrisy or sentimentality. It must be confessed that these "pagans" could die with a good grace. Here is an inscription, *incerti loci*, "of uncertain provenience," but in the Greek of Attica. *The tomb of Phrasikleia, "I shall be called a maid for evermore, having won from the gods this name instead of marriage."* I ought to add at once that the original is grave and beautiful poetry. I can only give the sense. One must read the Greek to feel entirely how good Phrasikleia is. At least she is not Little Nell. Some of the most famous epitaphs are by known authors; the most famous of all by Simonides. Over the Tegeans who fell in battle against the Barbarian he wrote: *Here lie the men whose valour was the cause that smoke went not up to heaven from broad Tegea burning; who resolved to leave their city flourishing in freedom to their children, and themselves to die among the foremost fighters.* All these little poems are beyond translation. The art of them lies in a deliberate bareness or baldness, which ought to be shockingly prosaic (and in English almost inevitably is so), but contrives to be thrilling poetry. The finest of all the epigrams is that on the Three Hundred who fell at Thermopylae. *O stranger, tell the Lacedaemonians that we lie here, following their instructions.* Literally that is what it says. Yet I suppose that even a man who does not know Greek may feel in an instinctive way that it may be extraordinarily good

in the original. It is. It is an instance of the famous Laconic brevity, whose virtue it was to cut at once to the heart of things. One other epigram I will add, partly because it also refers to the time of the Persian Wars, partly because the author was said (perhaps rightly) to be Plato. It is on the people of Eretria, a town in Euboea by the seashore, who were carried off into captivity and settled by Darius far away, hopelessly far, "at Arderikka in the Kissian land" beyond the Tigris. *We who one day left the deep-voiced swell of the Aegean lie here midmost the Plain of Ecbatana. Good-bye Eretria, our city famous once; good-bye Athens, the neighbour of Eretria; good-bye dear sea.* By the side of this mere "pathos" looks almost vulgar. If Plato wrote it, he was certainly a poet; but it is improbable that he did. I notice that Professor Burnet thinks Plato did not write any of the poems attributed to him in the manuscripts. In any case, when people say that Plato was "really a poet" they are thinking of his prose. I cannot help adding the irrelevancy that I wish they would not go on repeating this. He is an incomparably great master of imaginative prose. Is that not enough? He may have been no better at poetry than Ruskin or Carlyle. A poet is a man who writes poems.

Next to death the great test of sincerity is love. There used to be a general opinion that love, as we understand it, did not exist among the ancients at all. That point has been already discussed, but we may consider for a little the treatment of love in the Attic dramatists, who best represent the great period of Athenian development. There is plenty of love in them, only they don't mention it. "Please



do not be impatient," as the Greek orators say, "until you hear what I mean." Let us take Aeschylus, the earliest of the dramatists, first, and for a play let us take his *Agamemnon*. The great character is Clytaemnestra. She has allowed herself to become the paramour of a vile and cowardly relation of her husband called Aegisthus, who apparently seduced her out of mere idleness and hatred of King Agamemnon. When her husband returns she treacherously murders him. . . . What are you going to make of a subject like that? How are you going to make Clytaemnestra, I will not say "sympathetic," but merely human and tolerable? It seems an insoluble problem. Yet Aeschylus solves it. For one thing, he represents Agamemnon, the nominal hero of the play, as rather wooden, weak and bombastic—not very unlike Julius Caesar, the nominal hero of Shakespeare's play, where the dramatist had a similar but less difficult problem. The result is that the sympathies of the reader are not too deeply stirred in favour of the victim. Again, Clytaemnestra appears to be really in love with Aegisthus, while her feeling towards her husband is not merely the thirst for revenge or the hate a woman conceives of the man she has wronged; it is a physical abhorrence. She loathes him in her flesh. It is impossible to explain by what miracle of genius we are led to receive this impression, for she speaks nothing but flatteries and cajolery. Yet every speech of hers to him, as he dimly feels, shudders with a secret disgust. These long, glittering, coiling sentences are certainly not politic; they are the expression of a morbid loathing, which has ended by fascinating itself. When the blood of her lord

bursts over her she *rejoices no less than the sown ground in the heaven's bright gift of rain*. Now in the play Agamemnon is rather ineffective, but at any rate he is more a man than the immeasurably contemptible Aegisthus. Is it to be supposed that Clytaemnestra does not know that? Of course she knows, but she does not cease to love Aegisthus on that account. So the matter stands. Aeschylus does not make it any easier for you. A bad modern playwright would make Clytaemnestra a sadly misunderstood woman with a pitiful "case." It so happens that the queen does have something of a case, really a good case, but she does not much insist on it. She knows quite well that it is not for her murdered daughter's sake that she has killed the king. Neither is it from fear of detection; the woman does not know the meaning of fear. Aeschylus will not purchase your sympathy for her by any pretences. One of his unexpected, wonderful touches is to make her superbly intelligent. She feels herself so much superior intellectually to every one else that she hardly takes the trouble to deceive them. Nobody is asked to like Clytaemnestra, but surely she gives food for some reflection on the power and subtlety of Greek psychology, and the unswerving truthfulness of Greek realism, in a peculiarly complex affair of the heart.

There are in Sophocles at least two fine and tender studies of conjugal love of the conventional (but not silly conventional) type, namely Tekmessa in the *Ajax* and Dêianeira in the *Trachinian Women*; and one study not conventional in the very least, the Iokasta of *Oedipus the King*. She is the woman who slew herself because she had borne children

to her own son, who had murdered his father, who begot him by her. The legend has made her a thing of night and horror. Sophocles has made her grand, proud, sceptical, lonely, pitiful, ravaged by thoughts not to be breathed, horribly pathetic. But these three are wives. Of love between man and maid Sophocles has hardly a word to say. People quote Haimon and Antigone. There is no doubt of the young man's love for Antigone; he dies for her. But is she in love with Haimon? She is betrothed to him of course, but in ancient Greece these matters were arranged. She probably liked him a good deal; everybody likes him; but we are speaking of love. Those who have little doubts on the subject quote her cry, *Dearest Haimon, how thy father slights thee!* which she utters when Kreon has said, *I hate bad wives for my sons.* But they have no right to quote the cry as hers until they have proved she utters it; which they don't, but merely assume the manuscripts be wrong. The manuscripts give the line to Ismênê, the sister of Antigone, and they appear to be clearly right. Any one who looks at the context will see that it is Ismênê who brings the mention of Haimon into the dispute with Kreon. Antigone stands apart in proud and indignant silence. She will die rather than let the man who has outraged her dead brother see how much her resistance is costing her. Besides, I think the manuscripts are right anyway. Imagine the case of an extremely high-minded young lady, who for the very best reasons has quarrelled with her prospective father-in-law. The young lady's sister reminds the old man that after all Octavia is engaged to his son, which provokes the retort, "I object to bad wives for my



boys." Would Octavia then exclaim, "Dearest William, how your father insults you!"? Well, would she? But it looks delightfully like what Octavia's sister would say. Therefore, I vote for the manuscripts and giving the line to Ismênê.

Antigone had two brothers, Eteokles and Polyneikes. After their father had been driven from Thebes the brethren disputed the succession to his throne. Polyneikes lost, and took refuge in Argos, where he gathered assistance and marched against his native city. The attempt had no success, and Polyneikes and Eteokles fell in single combat. This mutual fratricide left Kreon, their uncle, king. He, in a flame of "patriotism," had Eteokles interred with honour and commanded that the body of Polyneikes should be left unburied. Such an order might be compared to excommunication, for the effect of it was for ever to bar the spirit of the dead from peace. Antigone sprinkled dust on the naked corpse, which satisfied the gods of the underworld and eluded the penalty of the ban. When Kreon asks her if the spirit of Eteokles will not resent the saining of his fraternal enemy—which would be the orthodox opinion—she replies, beautifully but inconsequently, *It is not my nature to join in hating, but in loving.* She also speaks of a higher, unwritten law. But Polyneikes is the favourite brother. I hardly think any one can read carefully the *Antigone* and the *Oedipus at Colonus* without seeing that. All through the *Antigone* he is never out of her thoughts. "Natural enough," you may be inclined to say. But is it? On the supposition that she is in love with Haimon? There is another play, the *Electra*, in which Sophocles portrays the love of a sister for a

brother ; and there are a good many points of resemblance between Electra and Antigone. Only there is in the love of Electra for Orestes (whom she brought up) a fierce, hungry, maternal quality, which would be out of place between the children of Oedipus.

When we pass to Euripides we seem by comparison to approach the modern. The impression is largely illusory, but not wholly false. It is the fact that he is troubled by many of the problems that trouble us, and it is the fact that he sometimes answers, or does not answer, them in a way we should regard as modern. This comes out in his treatment of love. It is best seen in the *Medea* and the *Hippolytus*. Medea has a special interest for us because she is a Barbarian (princess of Colchis in the eastern corner of the Black Sea). But her case is quite simple. She is a woman in love with a man who is tired of her. Necessarily he cuts a poor figure in the story: She had saved his life. On the other hand, she had thrown herself at his head, she had done her best to ruin his chances in life, and all she had now to offer him was a perfect readiness to murder anybody who stood in his way. She is one of those women who are never satisfied unless the man is making love to them all the time, so that one may have a sneaking sympathy for that embarrassed, if rather contemptible, Jason. Indeed, Euripides' opinion of this kind of "Romantic" love is probably no higher than Mr. Shaw's. It is the passion of the Barbarian woman. That does not prevent Euripides from sympathizing profoundly with Medea, the passionate, wronged, foreign woman. Why, indeed, should it? The case of Medea, as Euripides with the pregnant brevity of

Greek art presents it, has seemed to many as true as death. It is an excellent example of realism.

More definitely than the *Medea*, the *Hippolytus* is a tragedy of love. Yet in the eloquence of the Romantic lover the one is as deficient as the other. Phaedra was dying for love of Hippolytus. Her secret is discovered and she dies of shame. What an opportunity for the sentimentalist! However, adds the relentless poet, that is not all the story. Before killing herself she forged a message to her husband making the charge of Potiphar's wife against Hippolytus. She could not die without the pleasure of hurting him. Yet Euripides does not represent her as an odious woman; quite the contrary. The question for us is, does she, when we read the play, strike us as real or not? The poet has set himself a difficult task—to convince us that a soul overthrown by desire, cruel, lying, unjust was yet essentially modest, gentle and honourable. If she is almost too convincing, so that a sentimental part of you bleeds inside, you will perceive that realism was not invented in Norway. And there is this about the Greek sort: it never exaggerates.

It is hardly to be believed how startling an effect of truth this moderation of the Greek writers can produce. Sappho, in the most famous of her odes, says that love makes her "sweat" with agony and look "greener than grass." Perhaps she did not turn quite so green as that, although (commentators nobly observe) she would be of an olive complexion and had never seen British grass. But, even if it contain a trace of artistic exaggeration, the ode as a whole is perhaps the most convincing love-poem ever written. It breathes veracity. It has an



intoxicating beauty of sound and suggestion, and it is as exact as a physiological treatise. The Greeks can do that kind of thing. Somehow we either overdo the "beauty" or we overdo the physiology. The weakness of the Barbarian, said they, is that he never hits the mean. But the Greek poet seems to do it every time. We may beat them at other things, but not at that. And they do it with so little effort; sometimes, it might appear, with none at all. Thus Aeschylus represents Prometheus as the proudest of living beings. The *Prometheus Bound* opens with a scene in which Hephaistos, urged on by two devils called Strength and Force, nails Prometheus to a frozen, desert rock. While the hero of the play endures this horrible torture, he has to listen to the clumsy sympathy of Hephaistos, who does not like his job, and the savage taunts of the two demons. To all this he replies—nothing at all. No eloquence could express the pride of that tremendous silence. Of course there is, or there used to be, a certain kind of commentator who hastens to point out that a convention of the early Attic stage forbade more than two persons of a tragedy to speak together at any time, so that in any event it was not permissible for Prometheus to speak. All you can do with a critic like that is (mentally, I fear) to hang a millstone round his neck and cast him into the deepest part of the sea.

Not but what the point about convention, if rightly taken, is extremely notable. It is an undying wonder how the kind of realism we have been discussing could be combined with, could even, as in that instance from the *Prometheus Bound*, make use of, the limitations imposed on the ancient poet.

To a reader who has not looked into the case it is hard to give even an idea of it. If a man were to tell you that he had written a novel in which the hero was Sir Anthony Dearborn and the heroine Sophia Wilde, while other characters were Squire Crabtree, Parson Quackenboss, Lieutenant Dashwood and the old Duchess of Grimthorpe, you would think to yourself you knew exactly what to expect. Yet you must admit there is nothing to prevent the man leaving out (if he can) Gretna Green, and the duel, and the eighteenth-century oaths. But if a Greek tragic dramatist put on the stage a play dealing, say, with the House of Atreus, he positively could not leave out any part of the family history. It was not done. So the audience knew your story already, and knew, roughly, your characters. Nor, as historians say, was that all. There had to be a Chorus, which had to sing lyrical odes of a mythological sort at regular intervals between the episodes of your drama ; while the episodes themselves had to be composed in the iambic metre and in a certain " tragic diction " about as remote from ordinary speech as *Paradise Lost*. How Aeschylus and Sophocles and Euripides contrive under such conditions to give a powerful impression of novelty and naturalness it is easier to feel than explain. About the feeling at least there is no doubt. Let us look again for a moment at that singular convention, the tragic Chorus. Very often it consists of old men who . . . sing and dance. Consider the incredible difficulty of keeping a number of singing and dancing old men solemn and beautiful and even holy. Yet the great tragic poets have overcome that difficulty so completely that I sup-

pose not one reader in a hundred notices that there is a difficulty at all. The famous Chorus of old men in the *Agamemnon*, whose debility is made a point in the play, never for a moment remind one of Grandfer Cattle. Rather they remind us of that "old man covered with a mantle," whom Saul beheld rising from the grave to pronounce his doom. It is, in their own words, as if God inspired their limbs to the dance and filled their mouths with prophecy.

There is only one way of redeeming the conventional, and that is by sincerity. I am very far from maintaining that the moral virtue of sincerity was eminently characteristic of the ancient Greek; but intellectual sincerity was. None has ever looked upon gods and men with such clear, unswerving eyes; none has understood so well to communicate that vision. To see that essential beauty is truth and truth is beauty—that is the secret of Greek art, as it is the maxim of true realism. To keep measure in all things, that no drop of life may spill over—that is the secret of Greek happiness. To be a Greek and not a Barbarian.





## NOTES

### THE AWAKENING

THE beginnings of Ionia, the earlier homes and the racial affinities of the Ionians, are still obscure, although the point is cardinal for Greek history. There is perhaps a growing tendency to find "Mediterranean" elements in the Ionian stock, and this would explain much, if the Ionians of history did not seem so very "Aryan" in speech and habits of thought. On the other hand the "Aryan" himself is daily coming to look more cloudy and ambiguous, and so is his exact contribution to western culture.

The chief ancient sources of our information concerning the Ionians are Herodotus, Pausanias and Strabo.

P. 14. Thuc. I. 2. Thuc. I. 6. Herod. I. 57.

P. 15. See especially D. G. Hogarth, *Ionia and the East* (1909).

J. Burnet, *Who was Javan?* in Proceedings of the Class. Assoc. of Scot. 1911-12.

Herod. I. 142.

P. 16. Herod. I. 171 f.

P. 17. An authoritative little book dealing with (among other peoples) the Anatolian races is D. G. Hogarth's *The Ancient East* (Home Univ. Ser.), 1914. Also H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East* (1913).

- P. 18. V. Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée* is full of instruction on the ways of the ancient mariner.  
For the Colchians, see Hippocrates *de aer. aq. loc.* 15. Cf. Herod. II. 104 f.
- P. 19. Chalybes. *Il.* II. 857. Herod. I. 203.
- P. 20. Herod. IV. 93 f. Olbia. Herod. IV. 18.  
Scythian bow. Plato, *Laws*, 795-.
- P. 21. Herod. IV. 18 f.
- P. 22. Herod. IV. 172 f.
- P. 25. Herod. II. 152. Abusimbel inscr. in Hicks and Hill's *Manual*.
- P. 26 f. Fragments of Archilochus in Bergk's *Poet. Lyr. Gr.*

### KEEPING THE PASS

The Battle of Thermopylae as related by Herodotus (practically our sole authority) is an epic. Therefore in telling it again I have frankly attempted an epical manner as being really less misleading than any application of the historical method. This is not to say that the narrative of Herodotus has not been greatly elucidated by the research of modern historians, especially by the exciting discovery of the path Anopaia by Mr. G. B. Grundy. I have followed his reconstruction of the battle (which may not be very far from the truth) in his book, *The Great Persian War* (1901). See also Mr. Macan's commentary in his great edition of Herodotus.

- P. 34. See Frazer's note on Thermopylae in his edition of Pausanias.
- P. 36. Cf. Xen. *Anab.* VII. 4, 4 (Thracians of Europe).
- P. 39. Tiara. *schol.* Ar. *Birds* 487. The King's tiara was also called *kitaris*.



- P. 39. For Persian dress *cf.* with Herod. Strabo 734. Xen. *Cyrop.* VII. 1, 2. There are also representations in ancient art, e.g. a frieze at Susa.

## THE ADVENTURERS

- P. 45. Strabo IV.  
 P. 46. Herod. IV. 44.  
 P. 47. *The Greek Tradition* (1915), Allen and Unwin, p. 6 f.  
 P. 48. Herod. IV. 151-153.  
 P. 50. For an account of the Oasis at Siwah, see A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, vol. I.  
 P. 51. Hymn *ad Apoll.* 391 f.  
 P. 52. Pind. *Ol.* 3 *ad fin.*  
 P. 53. Herod. VI. 11, 12, 17. *Cf.* Strabo on foundation of Marseille, IV (from Aristotle).  
 P. 54. Herod. III. 125, 129-137 (Demokedes).  
 P. 55. Polycrates. Herod. II. 182 and III *passim*.  
 P. 61 f. Xen. *Anab.* I-IV.  
 P. 63. Pisidians. *Cf.* Xen. *Memor.* V. 2, 6.  
 P. 67. *L'Anabase de Xenophon avec un commentaire historique et militaire*, by Col. (General) Arthur Boucher, Paris, 1913.  
 P. 69. There is a fine imaginative picture of Nineveh in the Book of Jonah.  
 P. 71. The famous Moltke was nearly drowned from a "tellek."  
 P. 77. The hot spring may be the sulphurous waters of Murad, which have wonderful iridescences. The Armenian underground houses are still to be seen. These earth-houses are found elsewhere—in Scotland, for instance. See J. E. Harrison, in *Essays and Studies presented to W. Ridgeway*, p. 136 f.

## ELEUTHERIA

- P. 82. Aesch. *Pers.* 241 f. Herod. VII. 104.
- P. 83. *Pers.* 402 f. Eur. *Helen* 276.
- P. 84. Thuc. I. 3, 3 ("Hellenes" and "Barbarians" correlative terms).  
Herod. I. 136.
- P. 85. Aeschines 3, 132. Letter to Gadatas, Dittenb. *Syllog.*<sup>2</sup> 2.  
Herod. III. 31. Cf. Daniel VI. 37, 38. Ezekiel xxvi. 7.
- P. 86. Herod. IX. 108-113.
- P. 88. Cf. vengeance of Persians on Ionians, Herod. VI. 32.  
Herod. VII. 135.
- P. 89. Herod. VIII. 140 f.
- P. 90 f. "The ancients were attached to their country by three things—their temples, their tombs, and their forefathers. The two great bonds which united them to their government were the bonds of habit and antiquity. With the moderns, hope and the love of novelty have produced a total change. The ancients said *our forefathers*, we say posterity; we do not, like them, love our *patria*, that is to say, the country and the laws of our fathers, rather we love the laws and the country of our children; the charm we are most sensible to is the charm of the future, and not the charm of the past." Joubert, transl. by M. Arnold.
- P. 92. See J. E. Harrison on Anodos Vases in her *Prolegomena*, p. 276 f.  
Herod. VIII. 109. Herod. VIII. 65.
- P. 96. Herod. IX. 27. *Supplices* 314 f. But see the whole speech of Aithra, and indeed the whole play, which is full of the mission of Athens as

the champion of Hellenism. Cf. also Eur. *Heracld.* G. Murray, Introduction to trans. of Eur. *Hippol.* etc., on "Significance of *Bacchae*" (1902).

P. 97. Thuc. I. 70, 9. Herod. VII. 139. Dem. *de Cor.* 199 f.

P. 98. Arist. *Pol.* 1317<sup>a</sup> 40, agreeing with Plato *Resp.* 562B.

P. 99. Plato *Resp.* 563C. Herod. III. 80.

Herod. V. 78. Cf. Hippocr. *de aer. aq. loc.* 23, 24. Both agree that a high spirit may be produced by suitable *nomoi* and that man's spirits are "enslaved" under autocracy. This is a more liberal doctrine than that discussed in Aristotle, that Barbarians are slaves "by nature."

P. 100. *Supplices* 403 f. *Medea* 536 f.

The association of Liberty and Law is exhibited both positively and negatively (as in the breach of both by the tyrant) in the tragic poets, etc. Thus the *Suppliants* of Aeschylus is concerned with a point of marriage-law, the *Antigone* of Sophocles with a point of burial-law, and so on.

Another "romantic" hero is Cadmus.

P. 104. Hom. *Il.* VI. 447 f.

## SOPHROSYNE

P. 110. Plato *Resp.* 329B. *ib.* 439E.

P. 111. Plato *Resp.* 615C.

Xen. *Hellen.* VI. 4, 37.

P. 112. Plut. *Pelop.* 29. Herod. III. 50; V. 92.

P. 120. Herod. VIII. 26.

P. 121. *Purg.* XXIV. 137-8.



## GODS AND TITANS

- P. 122. *Od.* III. 48.
- P. 123 f. I may allow myself to refer, for more detailed evidence, to my article *The Religious Background of the "Prometheus Vincitus"* in *Harvard Studies in Class. Philol.* vol. XXXI, 1920. Cf. Prof. G. Murray in *Anthropology and the Classics*, ed. R. R. Marett.
- P. 124. *Theog.* 126 f. *Theog.* 147 f. "ill to name," οὐκ ὀνομαστοί. I think the meaning may be that to mention their names was dangerous—especially if you got them wrong. Cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 170. The Romans provided against this danger by the *indigitamenta*.
- P. 126. *Theog.* 453 f.
- P. 128. *Theog.* 617 f. *Theog.* 503 f.
- P. 129. Solmsen, *Indog. Forsch.* 1912, XXX, 35 n. 1. *Theog.* 886 f. *Theog.* 929<sup>b</sup> f.
- P. 130. Heracl. *fr.* 42 (Diels). Xenophan. *fr.* 11. Pind. *Ol.* I. 53 f.
- P. 136. On the "anarchic life," see Plato *Laws* 693–699. Democritus (139) says, "Law aims at the amelioration of human life and is capable of this, when men are themselves disposed to accept it; for law reveals to every man who obeys it his special capacity for excellence." Zeus, acc. to Plato *Crit. sub fin.* is a *constitutional* ruler.
- P. 137. Herod. I. 34 f.

## CLASSICAL AND ROMANTIC

## I

- P. 147. Plut. *Alex.* I.
- P. 150. *Il.* II. 459 f. *Il.* IV. 452 f. *Il.* XIX. 375 f. *Od.* XIX. 431 f. *Od.* XIX. 518 f.

- P. 151. *Il.* VI. 418 f. *Il.* XIV. 16 f. *Il.* XXIV. 614<sup>v</sup>f.  
 P. 152. *Il.* XIV. 347 f. *Od.* XI. 238 f.  
 P. 153. Pind. *Ol.* I. 74 f. *Ol.* VI. 53.  
 P. 155. *Il.* XXIII. 597 f.  
 P. 161 f. See my *Studies in the Odyssey*, Oxford, 1914.  
 P. 163. *Il.* III. 243 f. *Il.* XVI. 453 f. *Od.* XIX. 36 f.  
 P. 164. *Od.* XX. 351 f. *ad Cererem* 5 f. *ad Dion.* 24 f.

## II

- P. 168. Thuc. III. 38. ζητοῦντές τε ἄλλο τι ὥς εἰπεῖν ἢ  
 ἐν οἷς ζῶμεν.  
 On Elpis, see F. M. Cornford in *Thucydides  
 Mythistoricus*, ch. IX, XII, XIII.  
 P. 172. *Od.* XI. 235 f. Plato *Resp.* 573B.  
 P. 175. See Prof. Burnet, *Greek Philosophy* (1914),  
 Part I, p. 146 f.  
 P. 182. *Il.* XVIII. 205 f.  
 P. 183. *Il.* XII. 378 f.  
 P. 184. J. M. Synge said, "It may almost be said  
 that before verse can be human again it  
 must learn to be brutal." But this merely  
 shows how much we are suffering from a  
 reaction against sentimental romanticism.

## III

- P. 189. *Il.* XIII. 444. *Il.* XIII. 616 f. *Il.* XIV. 493 f.  
*Il.* XVI. 345 f. *Il.* XX. 416 f.  
 P. 190. *Il.* XVI. 751 f.  
 P. 191. Arist. *Nic. Eth.* III. 6, 6. Plato *Apol. ad fin.*  
*Od.* XI. 488 f. *Od.* XI. 72 f. Note the effect  
 of the καί before ζωός. It is "simple pathos"  
 if you like, hardly self-conscious enough to  
 be called "wistful." There are some won-  
 derful touches of it in Dante's *Inferno*.

- P. 192. Phrasikleia. Kaibel, *Epigr. Sepulchr. Attic.* 6.  
P. 193. The Eretrian epigram is preserved in the  
Palatine Anthology.  
P. 195. *Ag.* 1391 f.  
P. 196. *Ant.* 571 f.



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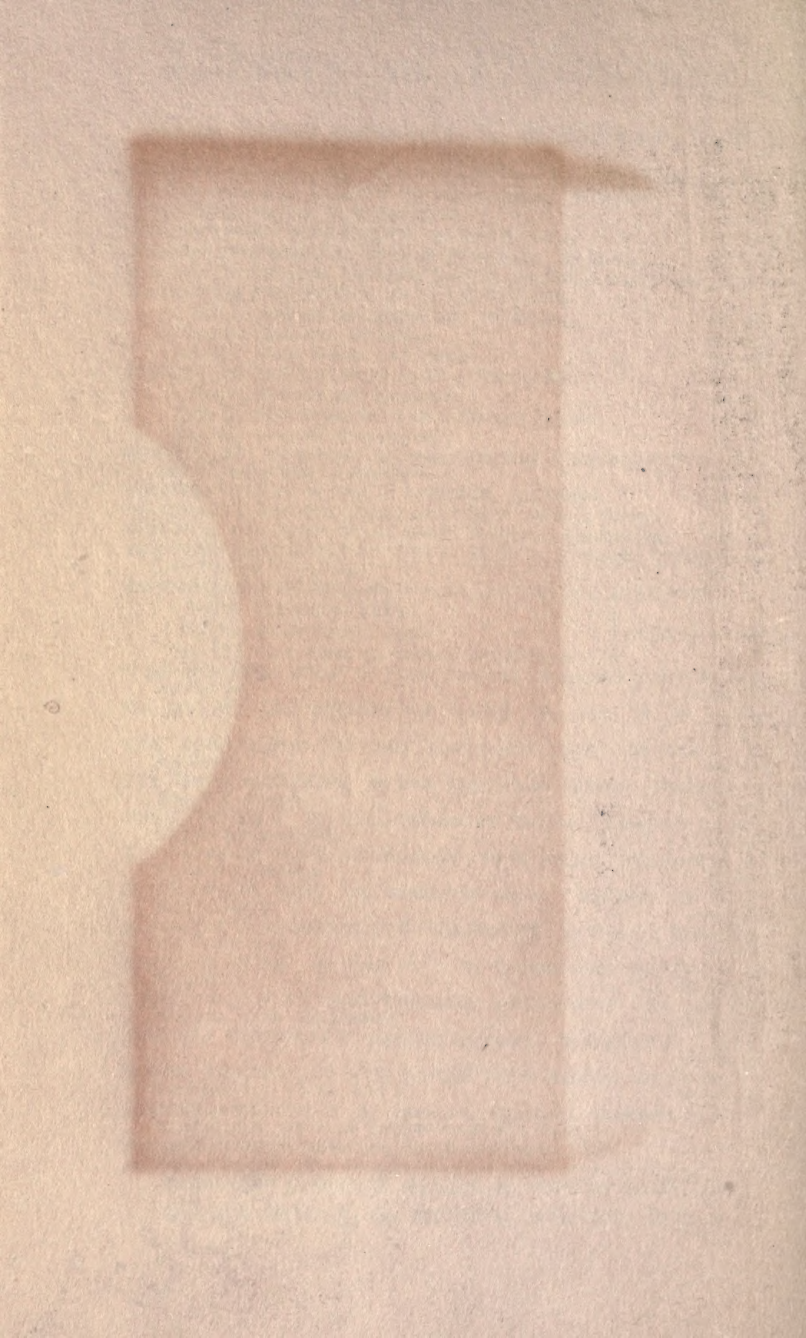
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